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LA CELESTINA: THE FIRST ACT RE-EXAMINED

A THESIS

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century, owes much to the concept of courtly love. Anti-feminism as a literary tradition is known in fifteenth-century Spain through such works as the third book of De Amore, by Andreas Capellanus, the Corbaccio and De Casibus by Boccaccio, and the second part of the Roman de la Rose, by Jean de Meung. An anti-feminist work by the Spaniard Luis de Lucena, the Repetición de Amores, which is roughly contemporary to La Celestina, is studied and compared with the first act, and shows a strong similarity in theme and use of sources.

In the final chapter an attempt is made to identify the author of the first act with Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, the Archpriest of Talavera. Alfonso Martínez is the author of the book known as Arcipreste de Talauera, which first appeared in 1438 and is primarily a treatise in condemnation of passionate love and contains an anti-feminist section. The work is a monument of early Spanish prose and its influence on La Celestina, especially the first act, has long been noted. The theory that the Archpriest of Talavera is the author of the first act, which has not yet been suggested, is based first of all on the fact that the Archpriest could have written the act since he was still alive in 1466 and the style of the act appears to be from an earlier period than the rest of the play; secondly from the similarity of the style, sources and theme of the Arcipreste de Talauera and the first act; and thirdly on the internal evidence of the act which indicates that the author was an old man and probably belonged to the clergy.

In the conclusion the significance of the study of the first act as a separate entity for the understanding of La Celestina as a whole is briefly discussed.



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## INTRODUCTION

La Celestina is one of the great masterpieces of Spanish literature, considered by most scholars to be surpassed only by Don Quixote, and perhaps the Poema de Mio Cid. Written at the end of the fifteenth century, it is a complex work of a unique genre. The form is a play, a comedy of love which ends in tragedy. It is a play of inordinate length, however, consisting essentially of a series of dialogues in which the characters are revealed through their words rather than their actions. Furthermore the structure is loose, the development leisurely, and there are long descriptive passages. For these reasons, La Celestina, according to many critics, is a kind of novel in dialogue (*novela dialogada*) and not really a play. For the sake of convenience, however, and because the question of genre has not been definitely settled, we shall freely refer to La Celestina as a play.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Stephen Gilman, for example, in a recent study of La Celestina (The Art of La Celestina, Madison, 1956, p.195) remarks: "I find myself in almost diametric opposition to those who would classify La Celestina generically as a dialogue novel". Gilman's solution is to call it "ageneric" since "La Celestina being artistically unique is necessarily without genre". Menéndez y Pelayo, in his fundamental essay on La Celestina (in Orígenes de la Novela, Edición Nacional de las Obras completas de Menéndez y Pelayo, Santander, 1943, Vol.III, p.220) refers to it as a dramatic poem: "La Celestina... es un poema dramático que su autor dió por tal, aunque no soñase nunca con verlo representado". The evidence in La Celestina itself indicates that at least the author, or authors, did not envision a stage performance. In the Prologue the statement appears that small groups would gather to hear the play read: "Assi que quando diez personas se juntaren a oyr esta comedia..." (La Celestina, Edición Crítica por M. Criado de Val y G. D. Trotter, Madrid, 1958, p.16). And in verses at the end of the play, written by its first editor Alonso de Proaza, there are instructions on how to read the play: "Si amas y quieres a mucha atencion / leyendo a Calisto mouer los oyentes..." (Cel., p.306).





The original version of La Celestina, which was first printed in Burgos, probably in 1499<sup>1</sup>, consists of sixteen acts and is entitled Comedia de Calisto y Melibea. In 1502 a revised version appeared containing five additional acts and a number of interpolations in the original acts (with the exception of the first act, as we shall see). The title was changed from Comedia de Calisto y Melibea to Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea<sup>2</sup>. The work soon came to be popularly known as La Celestina because of the powerful characterization of Celestina, the old woman who serves as a go-between for the lovers, and later editions bear the title Celestina, or La Celestina, followed by the original title, and today the play is generally referred to as La Celestina<sup>3</sup>.

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1. The printer was Fadrique de Basilea. Miss Clara Louisa Penney (The Book Called "Celestina", New York, 1954, p.6) believes that the date "can be fixed within four years: not before 1496, not after 1500". The first folio of this edition is presumably missing as there is no title or general synopsis of the play. The prefatory material and concluding verses, which appear in all later editions were probably not included as there would not have been sufficient space in the missing folio. The Burgos edition is believed not be princeps. The basis of this theory is that there are synopses, or argumentos, for each act, and in a later edition the argumentos are referred to as having been newly added (nuevamente añadidos); therefore the original edition must have been without argumentos.
  2. The word tragicomedia probably derives from Plautus, who calls his Amphitruo a tragico-comedia. There is only one instance of the use of the term between Amphitruo and La Celestina, in an obscure latin work of the fifteenth century, Fernandus Servatus, by the Spaniard Verardo de Cesena.
  3. The first edition to use the title Celestina is an Italian translation published in 1519. In Spain, barring lost editions, the title is not used until 1569.





La Celestina was immediately popular. At least eighty and possibly a hundred and twenty editions were published in Spain by 1635, and there were numerous editions of French, Italian, German and Flemish translations during the sixteenth century. After 1635 the play suffered a decline in popularity which did not revive until the end of the nineteenth century. Today La Celestina is drawing considerable attention and there have been numerous stage performances not only in Spanish speaking countries but also in France, England and the United States.

In England La Celestina was known as early as 1530 through a translation of the first four acts (to which a happy ending was added) printed, and possibly translated, by John Rastell. A complete translation based on a French version appeared in 1596, and two other editions were licensed during the 1590's, although no copies, if any were made, have survived. The play may have been produced on the stage in the 1570's, under the title of The most famous History of ij Spanessche lovers, but evidence for this is scant. The best known English translation is a prose version by James Mabbe, published in 1631 and entitled The Spanish bawd represented in Celestina<sup>1</sup>. It is an excellent, vigorous work, a minor masterpiece in its own right. Remarkably enough, this remained the only English translation until 1957, when L. Byrd-Simpson, of the University of Southern California, published a translation of the sixteen act version, or Comedia<sup>2</sup>. Since then two translations of the complete play

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1. James Mabbe was a celebrated hispanist of the Jacobean period. He served for some years at the English Embassy in Spain and was a prolific translator of Spanish literature. His translation of La Celestina, in which he refers to himself as Don Diego Puede-Ser (puede ser being the Spanish for "maybe" - hence a pun on the pronunciation of Mabbe) is paganized, no small feat since the Spanish contains hundreds of references to Christian practices and concepts.
  2. Henceforth we shall refer to the sixteen-act version as the Comedia and the twenty-one act version as the Tragicomedia.



have appeared, one in England, and another in the United States<sup>1</sup>.

The author of La Celestina is generally considered to be Fernando de Rojas, a citizen of the town of Talavera, near Toledo. An acrostic, formed by the first letters of verses preceding the play, reveals that Rojas had completed the play (acabó la comedia): this is the principal evidence of his authorship. No contemporary references - letters, documents, literary works, etc. - mention Rojas as the author of La Celestina, although in a legal document dated May 9th, 1584, a witness testified that he had heard that Rojas was the man who composed La Celestina<sup>2</sup>. Certain facts about Rojas' life have been uncovered<sup>3</sup>. He was a lawyer and a converso, or Jew converted to Christianity<sup>4</sup>. His birthplace was the village of Montalbán, but he spent most of his life in Talavera, perhaps because in the larger city he was less subject to anti-semitic feeling. He must have attained a certain degree of prominence, as for a period of

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1. The paucity of English translations until very recent times no doubt accounts for the general ignorance in the English-speaking world of one of the masterpieces of European literature.
  2. This was in a Probanza de Hidalguía de Sangre (proof of nobility of blood) made by Rojas' grandson who was a member of the Royal Audiencia, or court, at Valladolid.
  3. The principle research work was done by M. Serrano y Sanz and published in Noticias biográficas de Fernando de Rojas, autor de la Celestina, y del impresor Juan de Lucena, Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 3a época, Vol. VI, 1902, pp.245-299.
  4. The conversos as a class played a prominent role in the intellectual life of Spain in the late fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries. The famous decree of the Catholic Kings Ferdinand and Isabel forcing the Jews to become Christians on pain of expulsion created a class, among those who chose to remain, of nominal Christians who were regarded with suspicion by the Inquisition and were subjected to frequent prejudice and persecution. Thus the conversos remained a minority group which may account for the intellectual prominence they attained.





several months he was substitute mayor of Talavera. There is no record of his birth but we know that he died in 1541. He left a large library (for those days) of law books and "libros de romance" (books in Spanish) bequeathing the former to his son and the latter to his wife.

La Celestina is the story of the love of Calisto and Melibea. The general summary which appears at the beginning of the play gives the feeling of the work better than a modern recapitulation:

Calisto was of noble lineage and of good intelligence. He was genteel and well-bred, and endowed with many charms. He was of medium estate. He fell in love with Melibea, a young woman of very noble blood, generous, of a very wealthy family, and the sole heir to the fortune of her father Pleberio, and dearly loved by her mother Alisa. Stricken with love for her, Calisto wooed her. Her chastity was overwhelmed with the aid of an evil and cunning woman by the name of Celestina and the afflicted Calisto's two servants, who were deceived by Celestina and made to act unfaithfully because of their awakened greed and the pleasures they anticipated. The two lovers and those who helped them came to a sad and bitter end. Adverse fortune so set the stage at the beginning that the longed for Melibea appeared in Calisto's presence<sup>1</sup>.

The basic theme is the disastrous effects of "mad" love, or loco amor, and the play was written, according to the subtitle, in reprehension of mad lovers (compuesta en reprehension de los locos enamorados). Calisto's loco amor results directly or indirectly in the violent death of all the main characters. Celestina, to begin with, is murdered by Calisto's servants, Sempronio and Pármeno, as she refuses to divide the huge reward she has received for her services as the go-between. Then the servants are caught by the guards (after having nearly been killed by jumping out of the window in an effort to escape) and are summarily executed by decapitation. Shortly after Calisto slips

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1. The original Spanish is not given for the quotation as a qualitative judgement is not involved and some readers may have difficulty with fifteenth century Spanish. The quotation is taken from a translation of La Celestina by M. H. Singleton, Madison, 1958.



from the ladder he uses to climb over the wall into Melibea's garden and falls to his death. Finally, Melibea, in order to join her lover in death, throws herself from the highest tower of her father's mansion. The bereaved father, Pleberio, sums up this pessimistic view of love in a bitter speech in the final act of the play: "¡O amor, amor! ¡Que no pense que tenias fuerza ni poder de matar a tus subjectos! Herida fue de ti...". (Cel., p.299).

Although the conclusion is violent and tragic, much of the play is comedy and the term tragicomedia is therefore not inaccurate<sup>1</sup>. The scenes between Calisto and his servants, between the servants and their prostitute amigas, and with Celestina generally are often superb comedy, especially the seduction of Pármeno arranged by Celestina in the seventh act and Celestina's dinner party in the ninth act.

The extraordinary power of the work, however, lies in the characterization of the go-between Celestina. She is one of the most outstanding creations in literature, equal and perhaps even surpassing in massive "aliveness" Shakespeare's great comic characters<sup>2</sup>. This achievement is the more remarkable since La Celestina predates Shakespeare by nearly a century. As for contemporary works, none contain characters who begin to approximate the extraordinary vitality of the old go-between.

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1. In the prologue the author explains that he was forced to change the title from comedia to tragicomedia by some who heard the play and complained that the ending was too sad for a comedy: "Otros han litigado sobre el nombre, diciendo que no se auia de llamar comedia, pues acabaua en tristeza, sino que se llamasse tragedia". (Cel., p.17).
  2. Celestina has characteristics of both a Iago and a Falstaff, but cannot, of course, be compared with the great tragic figures, the Lears and the Hamlets. A study comparing Celestina to Iago has been made (M. Q. Terán, La Celestina y Oteló, Mexico, 1957); one comparing Celestina to Falstaff would be of considerable interest.





She is unforgettable, even in modern translation, and, of course, completely overshadows the love story; no more evidence of this is needed than the fact that the play is universally known as La Celestina rather than by the original title.

The characterization of the go-between is not the only evidence of the author's genius. Writing at a time when the Spanish language was rapidly changing and prose was characterized by stylized doctrinal means of expression, he had a remarkably accurate ear for realistic speech, especially of the lower classes. The action of the play as a whole is skillfully conceived. No stage directions are given but the movements of the characters and changes of scene are conveyed naturally by the dialogue and the device of "between-the-teeth monologues".<sup>1</sup> The love scenes in Melibea's garden are charming and poetic, foreshadowing similar scenes in Romeo and Juliet<sup>2</sup>. At least one character besides

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1. "Between-the-teeth" monologues simply refer to monologues, or asides spoken in the presence of other characters but heard only by the audience.
  2. Romeo, like Calisto, climbs the wall of the orchard to see his beloved. In both scenes there is an intense feeling for nature:

LA CELESTINA

Melibea: ¡O sabrosa traycion! ¡O dulce sobresalto! ¿Es mi señor y mi alma? ¿Es el? No lo puedo creer. ¿Donde estauas, luziente sol? ¿Donde me tenias tu claridad escondida? ¿Aua rato que escuchauas?... Mira la luna, quan clara se nos muestra; mira las nuues como huyen; oye la corriente agua desta fonteica, quanto mas suaue murmurio su rio lleva por entre las frescas yeruas. Escucha los altos cipreses, como se dan paz vnos ramos con otros por intercession de un templadico viento que los menea. ¡Mira sus quietas sombras, cuan oscuras estan e aparejadas para encobrir nuestro deleyte! (p.280)

ROMEO AND JULIET

Romeo: O speak again, bright angel; for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
As is a winged messenger of heaven  
Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes  
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,  
And sails upon the bosom of the air...  
I have the night's cloak to hide me from their  
eyes...

(Act II, Sc.ii)



Celestina, Melibea, is portrayed in depth and shows psychological insights of a high order.

La Celestina's dual nature, dramatic and novelistic, makes it a precursor of both the drama and the novel in Spanish literature. Lope de Vega consciously imitated La Celestina in many of his plays<sup>1</sup>. The picaresque novel of the sixteenth century, Lazarillo de Tormes, for example, or Guzmán de Alfarache, owes much to Celestina's wit and ingenuity. Cervantes himself was influenced by La Celestina, especially in the short novels and entremeses (one act plays), and he is responsible for the most famous (and most succinct) literary criticism of the work:

... Segun siente Celestí -  
Libro en mi opinion diví -  
Si encubriera mas lo humá -.<sup>2</sup>

The direct influence of La Celestina on other European literatures is less apparent<sup>3</sup>. The importance of the work is rather as the forerunner of the novel form: La Celestina can be regarded as having ushered in the novel in Spain, from where it spread through Don Quixote

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1. According to Menéndez y Pelayo "Lope de Vega tributó a la Celestina el más alto homenaje imitándola con magistral pericia en aquella 'acción en prosa' que era una de sus obras predilectas (por ventura de mi la más querida)". (Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 448).
  2. This appears in the prologue to Don Quixote, Book I, and freely translated means: "...according to Celestina, in my opinion a divine book, had it concealed the human more".
  3. Very little has been written on this subject although La Celestina was well known in France, Italy and England (not to mention the Netherlands and Germany) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as may be inferred from the number of translations, and must have influenced these literatures to some extent. Shakesperian scholars in particular might find a detailed study of the relationship between La Celestina and Shakespeare fruitful.





to the rest of Europe<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most controversial critical problems of La Celestina concerns the unity of its composition. Curiously enough the problem arises not from insufficient evidence of the genesis of the play but from too much evidence. The prefatory material of La Celestina ( a letter, acrostic verses, and, in the Tragicomedia, a prologue) must, if taken at face value, lead to the conclusion that there were three stages in the writing of the play and that there were two authors. The first stage, according to this evidence, was a fragment, date and author unknown. The second stage was the Comedia: Fernando de Rojas, while still a law student at Salamanca, discovered the fragment and, keeping it intact as the first act, wrote the other fifteen acts. The third stage was the Tragicomedia, Rojas adding five acts and making a number of changes to the other acts, with the exception of the first act.

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1. General works on La Celestina are scarce. The fundamental introduction to the play is Menéndez y Pelayo's brilliant essay in the Orígenes de la Novela (op. cit., Vol. III, pp.219-458), first published in 1910. Although out of date in many respects it is still the main authority. Julio Cejador y Frauca's edition of La Celestina, published in 1913, contains a useful (although often debatable) introduction and copious notes. R. Foulché-Delbosc (who is responsible for an earlier edition), wrote extensively on La Celestina in the Revue Hispanique (see Vol.VII, 1900, pp.28-80; Vol.IX, 1902, pp.171-195; and Vol.LXXVIII, 1930, pp.544-599). F. Castro Guisasola (Observaciones sobre las Fuentes Literarias de La Celestina, Madrid, 1926) has written the most comprehensive treatise on the sources of the work. Coming down to more recent times, Stephen Gilman's The Art of la Celestina (op. cit.) is a detailed but controversial study of style, theme and character. Still to be published is Maria Rosa Lida de Malkiel's book which will probably be a most important contribution to Celestina studies. D. W. McPheeters, who has examined the eight hundred pages of typescript, states that Mrs. Malkiel "attempts to determine the artistic originality of La Celestina by studying a multitude of classical, medieval and contemporary antecedents as they affect subject, technique and characters". (see D. W. McPheeters, The Present Status of Celestina Studies. Symposium XII, 1958, pp.196-205). A. D. Deyermond has written an exhaustive book on Petrarch and La Celestina, The Petrarchan Sources of La Celestina, Oxford University Press, 1961.



The evidence of the prefatory material, however, seems at first sight to be contradicted by the text of the play itself. Act I appears to be perfectly integrated in the Comedia, and it is the additions of the Tragicomedia which, if anything, seem to be by a different hand.

This contradiction between what might be called internal and external evidence has led, at one time or another, to a wide range of theories concerning authorship and unity of composition. Preconceptions in regard to the literary process have, in our view, largely determined the choice of theory. Menéndez y Pelayo, for example, writing from an idealistic point of view, would not accept a multiplicity of authors. For him a masterpiece of the order of La Celestina must be the work of a single genius<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand such distinguished Celestina scholars as Julio Cejador<sup>2</sup> and René Foulché-Delbosc<sup>3</sup> felt that the additions of the Tragicomedia were artistically inferior to the rest of the play and therefore, ipso facto, the work of a lesser author, whereas the first act, not being inferior, must have been by Rojas as well as the other acts of the Comedia. A third theory is that all three parts of La Celestina, the first act, the rest of the Comedia, and the additions of the Tragicomedia, were by different authors. The basis of this theory is a statistical analysis of style which shows variations in the frequency of grammatical and stylistic usages in the three parts; this assumes, of course, that an author's style remains constant, which is not necessarily true<sup>4</sup>.

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1. M. Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. III, p.274.

2. J. Cejador y Frauca, ed. La Celestina, introduction, Vol. I, pp.XVI-XVII.

3. R. Foulché-Delbosc, op. cit.

4. This analysis is the work of R. E. House and some of his students at the University of Iowa. See R. E. House, The Present Status of the Problem of Authorship of the Celestina, Philological Quarterly, 1923, Vol.II, pp.38-47; and M. Mulroney and I. Probst, Notes on the Authorship of the Celestina, Philological Quarterly, Vol. III, pp.81-91.





Within the last ten years a growing number of critics have come to the conclusion that none of the above theories is correct and that the evidence of the prefatory material - i.e., the first act is by an unknown author but Fernando de Rojas wrote the rest of the play, including the additions of the Tragicomedia - is after all trustworthy. Ramón Menéndez Pidal<sup>1</sup>, Martín de Riquer<sup>2</sup>, Marcel Bataillon<sup>3</sup> and M. Criado de Val<sup>4</sup> are among those who have written in favor of this view. They have carefully analysed the parts of La Celestina in terms of style and structure, and their findings are convincing: as is so often the case, the internal evidence, which at first sight seems contradictory, corroborates the external evidence when it is subjected to unprejudiced critical study.

The tentative settlement of the authorship problem, however, is a recent development in the critical history of La Celestina, and this accounts for the fact that the play has never been seriously studied from the point of view of two authors. Scholars have generally treated La Celestina as a work by a single author and have considered the profusion and confusion of authorship theories as a hindrance to the criticism of literary values<sup>5</sup>.

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1. La lengua en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos, Cuadernos Hispano-americanos, XIII, 1950, pp.9-24.
  2. Fernando de Rojas y el Primer Acto de "La Celestina", Revista de Filología Española, XLI, 1957, pp.380-394.
  3. La "Célestine" primitive, Studia Philologica et Litteraria in Honorem, L. Spitzer, Bern, 1958, pp.39-55.
  4. Índice Verbal de la Celestina, Madrid, 1955.
  5. Stephen Gilman, for example, deliberately discusses La Celestina as if it were all written by Fernando de Rojas, although he admits that Rojas probably did not write the first act. (Op. cit., p.14).



This approach was justified as long as the authorship of La Celestina was in doubt, but now that the theory of two authors is widely accepted, a re-examination of the play in the light of this theory should be made. Obviously the presence of two authors, each with his own artistic purpose and style, must affect the interpretation of a work.

The purpose of this essay is to make an initial study of the first act, seen as a work distinct from the rest of the play. The first chapter summarizes the arguments and evidence for and against the theory of two authors; this seemed necessary since the basic assumption of the essay is the correctness of the theory. The succeeding chapters seek to establish the literary identity of the first act: the nature of the work, the ideas it expresses, the tradition to which it belongs. In the final chapter the possible identity of the author is discussed, and in conclusion the significance of our approach to the first act for the interpretation of La Celestina as a whole is briefly touched on. This, however, will require a complete study of its own.



## CHAPTER I

### AUTHORSHIP

The problem of the authorship of La Celestina has been examined in the light of four kinds of evidence:

1. The significance of the prefatory material.
2. The unity, or lack of unity, of theme, plot and character.
3. The use of sources.
4. The style and language.

The prefatory material consists of a letter, verses and a prologue. The letter and verses first appear in the Comedia editions of 1500 (the Burgos, or first edition of the Comedia, has no prefatory material - see note on page 2). The prologue was added in the editions of the Tragicomedia.

The letter, entitled El auctor a vn su amigo (The author to a friend of his), explains the purpose and circumstances of the writing of the Comedia de Calisto y Melibea. The author states that when he was a student of law he had discovered an unfinished work whose moral and artistic excellence had greatly impressed him. This fragment, he believed, was especially useful as a warning against the "fires of love", and since many young men in his native land were then amorously involved, he considered it his patriotic duty to make the fragment known. Therefore, although not a writer by profession, he had himself finished the fragment during fifteen days of vacation. The fragment was anonymous and the writer of the letter remains deliberately anonymous as well, since, he says, to acknowledge authorship might jeopardize his professional career. The letter concludes by saying that the verses which follow





are offered as an apology for his poor efforts, and that the end of the fragment is identified by a cross in the text at the end of the first scene<sup>1</sup>.

The verses are written in octava rima, or stanzas of eight lines each in rhymed couplets. The muse is conventionally invoked and the moral purpose of the work is further elaborated. We are again told of the discovery of the fragment, with the added information that the discovery was made in Salamanca<sup>2</sup>. But the real purpose of the verses is to reveal the identity of the man who had finished the fragment. For the first letter of each line forms an acrostic giving the message that,

El Bachiller Fernando de Rojas acabo la Comedia de Calisto  
y Melibea y fue nascido en la puebla de Montalvan<sup>3</sup>.

The prologue, which was added in the editions of the Tragicomedia, is primarily a treatise on the universality of strife, freely translated from Petrarch's De Remediis utriusque Fortunae, and which has little to do with the play itself. At the end of the prologue, however, the author explains that he had reluctantly agreed to lengthen the Comedia because many of his readers complained that the love story was not long enough. He also says that he had changed the word Comedia in the title to Tragicomedia because the ending was too sad for a comedy and that the first author, whose theme had been comic rather than tragic, was in fact responsible for the designation Comedia. There is no suggestion here, therefore, that the author

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1. No cross, however, has been found in the examples of the Comedia editions which have survived, and since "scene" could refer either to a scene within the first act or to the act itself, the fragment is not clearly identified here.
  2. The university at Salamanca was, of course, the most famous in Spain during the late middle ages and the Renaissance. It was closely connected with Toledo, to which see Talavera belonged, and therefore was a logical place for Rojas to study law.
  3. "The Bachelor Fernando de Rojas finished the Comedia de Calisto y Melibea and was born in the village of Montalban". Acrostics were a popular device at the time. The key is actually given at the end of the play, in the verses written by Alonso de Proaza:

...por ende juntemos de cada renglon  
de sus onze coplas de letra primera...

(Cel., p.306)





of the additions of the Tragicomedia was not the same as the one who found and completed the original fragment, namely, Fernando de Rojas.

Several important changes in the letter and verses appear in the Tragicomedia editions. First of all, in the letter, the end of the fragment is now identified as being just before the sentence beginning "Hermanos mios..." which is the opening sentence of the second act. The fragment must therefore be identical with the first act. Secondly, the suggestion is inserted in both the letter and verses that the author of the fragment was either Juan de Mena or Rodrigo Cota<sup>1</sup>.

The evidence of the prefatory material may be summarized as follows: Fernando de Rojas, a bachelor of laws, native of Montalbán, is the author of all of La Celestina with the exception of the first act; an unknown author, who might be Mena or Cota, wrote the first act, which was discovered by Rojas at Salamanca.

Many critics, among whom Menéndez y Pelayo is the most prominent, have disregarded this evidence.

Their argument is twofold: first, the prefatory material is deliberately misleading; and second, the unity of La Celestina could only have been achieved by a single author.

It is certainly true that the prefatory material, at least the letter and verses, is not perfectly straightforward. Why, for example, did Rojas pretend that he was afraid of revealing his identity only to disclose it through the transparent device of the acrostic (which, furthermore, is explained in the concluding verses)? What of the cross which is supposed to mark the end of the fragment but is missing? What of the suggestion that the first author was Mena or Cota?

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1. Juan de Mena was a celebrated poet of the first half of the fifteenth century; Rodrigo Cota, a converted Jew, was a rather obscure poet who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century.



Neither are likely candidates<sup>1</sup> and therefore the suggestion seems frivolous, perhaps designed to show the reader that the story of the first author must not be taken too seriously. Finally, what of the almost incredible statement that Rojas had finished the play in fifteen days? How could a work of the stature of La Celestina have been created in so short a time, especially by a young man still apparently in the midst of his studies?<sup>2</sup>

These doubtful (and in some cases actually contradictory) aspects of the prefatory material place into question the reliability of the statements concerning a first author. It is not inconceivable that Rojas, or an editor, contrived the story of the discovery of the fragment and the anonymous author in order to heighten the reader's interest in the play. Or he may have wished to appear modest by pretending to be only a follower of the first author.

The evidence of the prefatory material is in fact inconclusive from either point of view. A much stronger case for the theory of a single author can be made from the unity of the play as a whole. The characters created in the first act show a nearly perfect continuity in the rest of the play. No one can doubt that the Celestina of the first act is essentially the same person as the Celestina in the remaining acts.

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1. The examples of Juan de Mena's prose which have survived are greatly inferior in style to the first act of La Celestina. Rodrigo Cota has only left poetry, so it is difficult to judge his merit as a prose writer. However, the quality of his poetry is not such as to indicate a great literary talent.
  2. Rojas himself is fully aware that he won't be believed and says in the letter that,

Assimesmo pensarian que no quinze dias de vnas vacaciones, mientras mis socios en sus tierras, en acabarlo me detuuiesse, como es lo cierto; pero avn mas tiempo y menos acepto.

(Cel., p.4)





The diabolic skill in the art of persuasion, which is one of Celestina's most striking characteristics, is first displayed in Act I when she induces Pármeno to betray his master, Calisto. It reappears, the technique and virtuosity quite unchanged, in Act IV when she convinces Melibea to take the first fatal step in the intrigue - giving her sash to Calisto - and in Act VII when she succeeds in reconciling Pármeno with Sempronio. Her avariciousness, her cynicism, her penchant for proverbs and literary sayings, her capacity for malicious intrigue, tempered by a certain joie de vivre which keeps her from being entirely odious, are all present in Act I and maintained and amplified with masterly skill in the rest of the play. To a lesser extent (since they are less fully created) the other characters of Act I continue to be themselves in the remaining acts. Calisto, Sempronio and Pármeno are all recognizably the same; Melibea and Celestina's apprentice Elicia appear so briefly in the first act that their continuity is not in question.

Unity of character is matched by unity of structure and dialogue. The leisurely pace of Act I in which character and situation are skillfully unfolded is continued in the succeeding acts. Only in Act XII does the action become more precipitous, as the tragedy begins to come to a head. There is no perceptible break in continuity between the first and second acts, and the first act seems to belong organically to the rest of the play. The dialogue of Act I consists of the same combination of humanistic learning and popular speech which is characteristic throughout the play. There is the same concern for realistic detail and seemingly specific events. Pedro Bohigas points out that the delightful piece of scandal which Pármeno reveals in the first act in his description of Celestina's profession - how Celestina sold the same girl three times as a virgin to the French Ambassador - is paralleled in





the other acts by details having the same feeling of actuality: such as Pármeno's remark in Act XIII that he had been a servant of the brothers of Guadalupe nine years and had received many a blow from them<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, according to the view of Menéndez y Pelayo and his followers, the profound organic unity of character, structure, and dialogue in La Celestina could only have been the result of a single author<sup>2</sup>.

Those who disagree with this position - and, beginning with Menéndez Pidal, they are today in the majority - admit that La Celestina shows a remarkable degree of unity; they feel, however, that this can be explained by the fact that the first act contains the entire play in seminal form, so to speak, and that Rojas, whose genius was of the same order as the author of the first act, could have achieved essential unity through careful study and assimilation of the fragment he had discovered<sup>3</sup>.

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1. P. Bohigas, De la Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, Estudios Dedicados a D. Ramon Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, 1957, Vol.VII, pp.161-162.
  2. Menéndez y Pelayo admitted that he couldn't prove that there weren't two authors but that it seemed to him incredible:

"El bachiller Rojas se mueve dentro de la fábula de la Celestina, no como quien continúa obra ajena, sino como quien dispone libremente de su labor propia. Sería el más extraordinario de los prodigios literarios y aún psicológicos el que un continuador llegase a penetrar de tal modo en la concepción ajena y a identificarse de tal suerte con el espíritu del primitivo autor y con los tipos primarios que el había creado".

(M. Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. III, p.259).

3. Menéndez Pidal remarked that,

"En lo que toca a la Celestina, su fuerte unidad de concepción artística... se explica bien porque en el autor primero está, como en semilla, la obra entera, siendo probable además que ese auto fuera acompañado del argumento de la comedia".

(R. Menéndez Pidal, op. cit., p. 14).



Furthermore, there is considerable evidence that the unity of the first act and the rest of La Celestina is not nearly as perfect as is claimed by the Menéndez y Pelayo school.

To begin with, Act I is out of balance with the rest of the play. Much longer than the other acts (thirty-six pages in the Criado de Val-Trotter edition, compared with twenty-one pages for the next longest act and an average of ten pages for all acts) it contains six separate scenes, whereas the remaining acts are generally one scene long and at the most two scenes. This lack of proportion has no artistic purpose; the various scenes of the first act are not particularly intimately connected and do not warrant their inclusion in a single act; in fact the first two scenes, in which Calisto is the central character, and the last four scenes, in which Celestina is the central character, should logically have been considered two separate acts.

The obvious reason for the anomalous nature of the first act is, of course, that it represents the fragment; Rojas himself maintained, in the letter, that he had deliberately not divided the fragment so that his readers would be aware of its exact extent<sup>1</sup>. Rojas' respect for the integrity of the fragment is also shown by the fact that the first act is scarcely amended in the Tragicomedia editions<sup>2</sup>, although Acts II-XVI (the other Comedia acts) are significantly changed by interpolations and deletions. Rojas apparently regarded the fragment as inviolable, and this is in keeping with his statements of profound

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1. "Y porque conozcays donde comiençan mis mal doladas razones, acorde que todo lo del antiguo auctor fuesse sin diuision en vn acto o cena incluso, hasta el segundo acto... (Cel., pp. 4-5).
  2. The few changes that occur are primarily in punctuation and spelling; the only significant change is the deletion of the phrase "las mugeres e el vino hazen los hombres renegar" in Sempronio's tirade against women.





admiration in the letter:

E como mirasse su primor, sutil artificio, su fuerte e claro metal, su modo e manera de lauor, su estilo elegante, jamas en nuestra castellana lengua visto ni oydo, leylo tres o cuatro vezes... ¡Gran filosofo era! (Cel., p.4).

It is still possible to argue, of course, that all this is part of Rojas' elaborate deception designed to establish the existence of a first author. This theory must be weighed against the specific evidence which will now be discussed.

In the second act Pármeno recalls the circumstances of Calisto's initial meeting with Melibea. Calisto was hunting and lost a falcon; his search for it took him by chance into Melibea's garden; there for the first time he sees Melibea, speaks with her, and falls in love<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of Pármeno's description of the meeting is to show that it was sheer chance that caused Calisto to fall in love with Melibea, an event which Pármeno felt would only be disastrous. The actual meeting, however, as it takes place in the initial scene of the first act, is obviously not by chance. Quite the contrary. Calisto addresses Melibea immediately by name, "En esto veo, Melibea, la grandeza de Dios"; he speaks of the "service, sacrifice, devotion and pious works" which he has offered to God in order to come into the presence of the beloved; his courtly oration was obviously prepared for the occasion. Indeed the scene is a typical example of stylized wooing and has nothing to do with hunting, a lost falcon, a garden, or a chance meeting. This misinterpretation of a scene in the first act by a character in the second argues strongly in favor of the theory of two authors.

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1. The synopsis, or argumento, of the first act also gives this account of the initial meeting, but it was probably based on Pármeno's story. The argumentos were probably supplied by the editors or printers of La Celestina after the first edition, since they are referred to as having been "newly added".





The unity of Celestina's character in Act I and the rest of the play has already been discussed. This unity, however, is not entirely complete. Celestina in Acts II-XXI has two important characteristics which were not included in the portrayal of the old woman in the first act. The first of these is here fondness for wine<sup>1</sup>. In Act IX Celestina becomes quite tipsy and gives a long speech extolling the virtues of wine. In the first act, however, this fondness is not mentioned at all, and the only reference to wine is a casual one, as an item in a list of provisions which Celestina's prostitute pupils were accustomed to bring in payment for instruction. The second characteristic is her demonism. At the end of Act III Celestina solemnly invokes the devil and in moments of crisis she invariably calls upon his help; there are descriptions of midnight forays in graveyards and other similar witchcraft. The Celestina of the first act, on the other hand, does not seem to have been a witch. Pármeno, in his description of Celestina in Act I, does mention at the end of a list of Celestina's talents and professions that she is a bit of a witch (un poquito hechizera), but it is obvious from the context that he is referring to the spells and charms which are the standard equipment of the professional go-between and not to her frightening demonism.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the existence of two authors is the fact that the sources of the first act and of the rest of the play are strikingly different<sup>2</sup>.

The author of the first act seems to have been oriented primarily towards the middle ages and the favourite authors of that period. He makes frequent use of Aristotle, especially the Ethics, and

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1. This characteristic became famous and is always included in Celestina's literary descendants.

2. Much of this information is based on Castro Guisasola, op. cit.



of the Epistolae of Seneca. References to Boethius and Origen show his knowledge of medieval philosophy and the church fathers. Authorities are quoted by name: "Escucha al Aristoteles", "No as leydo el filosofo do dize..." (Sempronio); "Como Seneca nos dize..." (Celestina). This is a typically medieval procedure. Rojas, on the other hand, was more a man of the Renaissance in his use of sources. He had read deeply in Petrarch, and according to A. D. Deyermond, there are no less than 99 borrowings from this author<sup>1</sup>. There are reminiscences of the vernacular works of Boccaccio. He was widely read in the contemporary and near contemporary Spanish poets, Mena, Manrique, Cota, Quiñones, Nicolás Nuñez, Fernández de San Pedro. He rarely refers to an authority by name, as in the first act.

But aside from this general orientation of the two authors there seems to have been an absolute difference in the use of some sources. Aristotle, Seneca and Petrarch were undoubtedly commonly known by all intellectuals during the second half of the fifteenth century, and yet the first two are almost totally absent in Acts II-XXI whereas the latter is totally absent from the first act<sup>2</sup>.

There are, of course, sources common to both parts. Terence's plays, especially the Eunuchus and the Andria, were obviously well known to both authors. Pármeno and Crito, who appear in the first act, and Sosia and Traso, who do not come on the scene until later in the play,

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1. A. D. Deyermond, op. cit., p.85.

2. Sempronio's long speech at the beginning of Act II does contain borrowings from Aristotle and Seneca; three speeches later the Petrarchan borrowings begin. Possibly the first author's contribution actually continued through Sempronio's speech.



are all names of characters from Terence. The influence of Terence is apparent in the dialogue throughout the play. Rojas was quite conscious of the Terentian quality of the first act as in the ninth stanza of the acrostic verses he (assuming that Rojas was responsible for these verses) actually calls it Terentian:

Jamas yo no vi Terenciana  
Despues que me acuerdo, ni nadie la vido  
Obra de estilo tan alto y subido  
En lengua comun vulgar castellana. (Cel., p.10)

Both parts also show an awareness of the works of the two famous archpriests, Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, and Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, Arcipreste de Talavera. The influence of the former is primarily in the character of Celestina, and of the latter primarily stylistic<sup>1</sup>.

Sources in common are only natural since the two authors were writing at approximately the same period. If there were only one author, however, the absence of Petrarch in the first act and of Aristotle and Seneca in the rest of the play would be difficult to explain<sup>2</sup>. A possible hypothesis could be that Rojas had written the first act and had left it for a period of time during which he underwent a profound Petrarchan influence. Such a hypothesis, however, has no facts to support it.

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1. This particular question will be dealt with at length in a later chapter.
  2. Professor Gilman who, like Menéndez y Pelayo, cannot bring himself to believe in two authors, tries to establish a "hidden" Petrarchan borrowing in the first act, which A. D. Deyermond does not accept. Gilman also feels that there is no thematic need for Petrarch in the first act; but Petrarch is not only used thematically, he is used as a kind of pedantic adornment for all situations. S. Gilman, op. cit., p.210, p.247, note 31.







To summarize, the use of sources in Act I and the rest of La Celestina indicates the existence of two authors: the first, oriented towards the middle ages, relying heavily on Seneca and Aristotle, and the second, Rojas, more of a man of the Renaissance and deeply influenced by Petrarch.

Stylistic differences between Act I and the rest of La Celestina have been studied in great detail. Since a complete discussion of the results would be beyond the scope of this thesis, only the more important points will be touched on here.

In terms of language, Act I is clearly more archaic than the rest of the play. For example, in the case of the verbs ser and estar used as auxiliaries there is a marked preference for the former, which was falling into disuse at the end of the fifteenth century, whereas in Acts II-XXI estar is the preferred form. Similarly haber with the infinitive to indicate necessity is used in Act I whereas the more modern tener is almost always used in the rest of the play for this purpose. Tenses are complex in Acts II-XXI and pluperfects, conditional future and past preterites are used frequently; in Act I the tenses are generally restricted to the simple past, present and future<sup>1</sup>. Aside from the grammatical forms, there are archaic usages of words. Maguera is used in Act I instead of aunque (y maguera que contigo me haya fecha nuevas, tu eres la causa); there is an occurrence of the archaic use of al after a pronoun (lo al que te he dicho) and of the locative y (fallo y a Melibea); and gelo and gela (for se lo and se la) are common forms.

Certain peculiarities of language, not necessarily archaic, also differentiate the two parts of La Celestina. The author of the first

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1. The verb in La Celestina has been minutely examined by Criado de Val in Índice verbal de la Celestina, op. cit.



act seems to have had a more artificial style than Rojas. He used latinized adjectival forms such as misto, impervio and inmerito; como with the subjunctive; the conjunction mas instead of pero; the phrase puesto que (quiero entrar; mas puesto que entre...). Rojas, on the other hand, had his own peculiarities of language. For example, the past participle quesido for querido; the use of the future indicative lo que querrás; the conjunction assi que; and the expressions assimesmo and mayormente<sup>1</sup>.

An important stylistic difference is in the use of enumeration, which is a favourite device in Act I. Here are two examples from this act:

Sempronio: Que todo lo que piensan osan sin deliberar: sus dissimulaciones, su lengua, su engano, su olvido, su desamor, su ingratitud, su inconstancia, su testimoniar, su negar, su reboluer, su presuncion, su vanagloria, su abatimiento, su locura, su desden, su soberuia, su subjecion, su parleria, su golosina, su luxuria y suziedad, su miedo, su atreuimiento, sus hechizerias, sus embaymientos, sus escarnios, su deslenguamiento, su desuerguença, su alcahueteria. (Cel., p.31)

Pármeno: Fazia soliman, afeyte cozido, argentadas, bujelladas, cerillas, llanillas, vnturillas, lustres, lucentores; clarimientes aluarinos. Y otras aguas de rostro, de rasuras de gamones, de corteza de spantalobos, de taraguntia, de hielos, de agraz, de mosto, destiladas y açucarados. (Cel., pp.42-43)

This intoxication with words is not characteristic of Rojas' style. When he uses repetition he does it purposefully, rather than in the incantatory rhythms of the first author. A good example of this more sophisticated use of repetition is Celestina's speech in Act IX.

No les duele a los tales lo que gastan segun la causa por que lo dan; no sienten con el embeuescimiento del amor, no les pena, no veen, no oyen; lo cual juzgo por otros que he conocido menos apasionados e metidos en este fuego de amor que a Calisto veo. Que ni comen ni beuen, ni rien ni lloran, ni duermen ni velan, ni hablan ni callan, ni penan ni descansan, ni estan contentos ni se quexan, segun la perplexidad de aquella dulce y fiera llaga de sus coraçones. (Cel., p.171)

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1. See Menéndez Pidal, op. cit., pp.13-14.





Celestina is describing the effects of love on a man. The verbal enumeration, *ni comen ni beuen*, etc., is carefully constructed so that the effect is not soporific. There is no redundancy, the verbs are logically paired off, and the general concept, that a man stricken by love is not sentient in the normal way, has already been introduced in the previous sentence, so that the enumeration fulfills the normal function of emphasis. Compared with the rather Rabelaisian speeches in the first act, Rojas' style in this passage is more mature and developed.

In conclusion, from a stylistic point of view, Act I seems to have been written at an earlier period than the rest of La Celestina (or at least the author was more old fashioned than Rojas). The style is less sophisticated and the language contains a number of words, expressions and grammatical usages which do not occur, or occur less frequently, in the rest of the play, and which were generally falling into disuse by the end of the fifteenth century when La Celestina was published.

If this evidence is considered together with the striking differences in sources used; the length of the first act and the fact that it was not amended; the slight, but nevertheless noticeable discrepancies in details of character and scene; and finally the statements in the prefatory material - if all these points are given due respect, the theory of the existence of two authors is very difficult to refute.

Act I of La Celestina must therefore presumably have a literary identity, and during the next few chapters it will be analysed and discussed from this point of view.





## CHAPTER II

### THE DEBATE: LOVE AND WOMEN

Act I of La Celestina can be divided into two parts. The first resembles a medieval débat in which two radically opposing views on the nature of love and women are presented by Calisto and his servant Sempronio; the second and longer part is the characterization of Celestina. In terms of plot very little actually happens. Calisto, having fallen in love with Melibea, attempts to win her and is rebuffed; as a result he decides to secure the services of the go-between, Celestina, and the act ends as she is hired. There is a sub-plot in which Celestina and Calisto's two servants, Sempronio and Pármeno, agree to work together in order to gain as much profit as possible from the affair. Dramatic considerations are subordinated to the author's tendencies on the one hand towards the didactic and on the other hand towards a novelistic development of character.

Although the figure of Celestina dominates the act and gives it its power, the author's intention was essentially didactic. The characters, whether gentleman, servant, or old whore, display a fine knowledge of moral philosophy. Pármeno, in an attempt to withstand Celestina's corrosive arguments to betray his master, quotes from Aristotle's Metaphysics, Chapter IX:

Pármeno: No curo de lo que dizes, porque en los bienes mejor es el acto que la potencia; y en los males mejor la potencia que el acto. Assi que mejor es ser sano que poderlo ser; e mejor es poder ser doliente que ser enfermo por acto. Y, por tanto, es mejor tener la potencia en el mal que el acto.  
(Cel., p.50)

Celestina is also well versed in the moral philosophers:

Que, como Seneca dixo, los peregrinos tienen muchas posadas y pocas amistades, porque en breue tiempo con ninguno pueden firmar amistad. Y el que esta en muchos cabos, esta en ninguno. Ni puede aprouechar el manjar a los cuerpos que en comiendo se lança; ni ay cosa que mas la sanidad impida que la diuersidad



y mudanca y variacion de los manjares. Y nunca la llaga viene a cicatrizar en la qual muchas medicinas se tientan, ni conualesce la planta que muchas vezes es traspuesta. Y no ay cosa tan prouechosa, que en llegando aproueche.

(Cel., pp.52-53)

Sempronio, like Pármeno, is an Aristotelian. The following passage is based on the Ethics, I, 8:

Lo primero eres hombre, y de claro ingenio. Y mas, a quien la natura doto de los mejores bienes que tuuo, conuiene a saber: hermosura, gracia, grandeza de miembros, fuerza, ligereza. Y allende desto, fortuna medianamente partio contigo lo suyo en tal cantidad, que los bienes que tienes dentro con los de fuera resplandecen.

(Cel., p.32)

Fernando de Rojas himself regarded the act as didactic and philosophical. In the prefatory letter he states that he had found in it "defensive arms" to resist the fires of love. The story was "sweet", he says, but what particularly impressed him was the philosophy:

vi, no solo ser dulce en su principal historia o ficion toda junta; pero avn de algunas sus particularidades salian deleytables fonteçicas de filosofia, de otros agradables donayres de otros auisos y consejos contra lisonjeros y malos sirvientes e falsas mujeres hechizeras...Gran filosofo era!

(Cel., p.4)

Rojas probably stressed the didactic aspects of the fragment, and by implication the rest of the play, out of consideration for his own safety. As a converso in the time of the Catholic Kings he had to be wary of the early Inquisition, especially as La Celestina contained some passages which could be interpreted as blasphemous<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless the didactic quality of the act is undeniable and is particularly apparent in the débat which takes up the first third of the act.

The dialogue between Calisto and Sempronio develops very clearly the two points of view towards love. Calisto speaks from the tradition of courtly love. For him the woman is a goddess and love a religion.

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1. La Celestina did, in fact, come under the censure of the Inquisition, although not until after Rojas' death. See O. H. Green, The Celestina and the Inquisition, Hispanic Review, XV, 1947, pp. 211-216.





Sempronio argues from the Aristotelian-Christian point of view: woman is an inferior being and love is a passion to be avoided<sup>1</sup>.

Calisto's religion of love is obvious in the first scene with Melibea. He compares his vision of Melibea with the divine vision of God:

Por cierto, los gloriosos santos, que se deleytan en la vision diuina, no gozan mas que yo agora en el acatamiento tuyo.  
(Cel., p.23)

He has been granted the sight of Melibea because of his religious duties:

incomparablemente es mayor tal galardon que el seruicio, sacrificio, deuocion y obras pias, que por este lugar alcançar yo tengo a Dios offrecido.  
(Cel., p.23)

Later, when speaking to Sempronio, Calisto actually substitutes Melibea for the Christian God. Calisto, exclaiming that, if the fires of Purgatory are as severe as the fires of love, he hopes that his soul perish, is challenged by Sempronio:

Sempronio: ¿Tu no eres cristiano?

Calisto: ¿Yo? Melibeo soy, y a Melibeo adoro, y en Melibeo creo, y a Melibeo amo.

(Cel., p.28)

And when Sempronio refers to Melibea as a mere woman Calisto is outraged:

Calisto: ¿Muger? ¡O grossero! ¡Dios, Dios!

Sempronio: ¿Y assi lo crees, or burlas?

Calisto: ¿Que burlo? Por Dios la creo, por Dios la confieso, y no creo que ay otro soberano en el cielo, avnque entre nosotros mora.

(Cel., p.29)

The goddess Melibea must, of course, be suitably described, and Calisto, following the courtly tradition of descriptions of feminine beauty, systematically discusses every part of her body, beginning with the hair:

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1. The general remarks on courtly love are mainly based on The Allegory of Love, C. S. Lewis, Oxford University Press, 1936, and The Heresy of Courtly Love, A. J. Denomy, New York, 1947.





Comienço por los cabellos. Vees tu las madezas del oro delgado que hilan en Arabia? Mas lindos son, y no resplandecen menos...los ojos verdes, rasgados; las pestañas, luengas; las cejas delgadas e alcadas; la nariz mediana; la boca pequeña...

(Cel., pp.33-34)

The description ends in a comparison with the three goddesses who were judged by Paris: Melibea is incomparably more beautiful than any of these:

One of the important characteristics of the courtly lover is humility before his lady. When Calisto thinks that Melibea is about to speak kindly to him in the first scene he vows that his ears are unworthy to hear her words:

¡O bienauenturadas orejas mias, que indignamente tan gran palabra aueys oydo!

(Cel., p.24)

Calisto considers himself unworthy to love Melibea:

Porque amo aquella, ante quien tan indigno me hallo, que no la espero alcançar.

(Cel., p.29)

and all his accomplishments are as nothing compared to those of Melibea:

...en todo lo que me has gloriado, Sempronio, sin proporcion, ni comparacion se auenta Melibea.

(Cel., pp.32-33)

Calisto is even humble before Celestina, who, as a means to Melibea, in some way represents her:

Deseo llegar a ti (he says to Celestina) cobdicio besar estas manos llenas de remedio. La indignidad de mi persona lo embarga. Dende aqui adoro la tierra que huellas y en reuerencia la beso.

(Cel., p.47)

For Calisto, love is an end in itself, the supreme happiness, and when Sempronio goes to fetch Celestina, he devoutly prays that he be granted this happiness as a Chrisitan would pray for salvation:

¡O todopoderoso, perdurable Dios! Tu que guias los perdidos, y los reyes orientales por el estrella precedente a Belen truxiste, y en su patria los reduxiste, humilmente te ruego que guies a mi Sempronio, en manera que conuierta mi pena e tristeza en gozo, y yo, indigno, merezca venir en el desseado fin.

(Cel., p.36)



Sempronio's attitude towards women and love is diametrically opposed. Woman, far from being divine, is an imperfect creature, greatly inferior to man. In fact, for the Aristotelian Sempronio, man perfects the woman, just as form perfects matter, and for this reason women must love men, but not necessarily the other way around. At the end of Calisto's description of Melibea, Sempronio remarks that even if she is beautiful, Calisto is still superior simply because he is a man:

Sempronio:Puesto que sea todo esso verdad, por ser tu hombre eres mas digno.

Calisto: ¿En que?

Sempronio:En que ella es imperfecta, por el qual defecto dessea y apetece a ti, y a otro menor que tu. No as leydo el filosofho do dize: "Assi como la materia apetece a la forma, assi la mujer al varon?".

(Cel., p.34)

Therefore Calisto's humility is wrong, and Sempronio scolds his master:

Ponte, pues, en la medida de honrra, piensa ser mas digno de lo que te reputas. Que cierto, peor extremo es dexarse hombre caer de su merecimiento, que ponerse en mas alto lugar que deve.

(Cel., p.32)

And again:

Calisto: ¿Que me reprueuas?

Sempronio:Que sometes la dignidad del hombre a la imperfeccion de la flaca muger.

(Cel., p.29)

Women, according to Sempronio, are not only inferior: they are vicious.

Grudgingly admitting that there are some good women, Sempronio condemns the majority:

Pero destas otras, quien te contaria sus mentiras, sus trafagos, sus cambios, su liuiandad, sus lagrimillas, sus alteraciones, sus osadias? Que todo lo que piensan, osan sin deliberar. Sus dissimulaciones, su lengua, su engaño...

and ends with the categorical statement that women are the cause of all sin:

Por ellas es dicho: arma del diablo, cabeça del peccado, destruycion de parayso.

(Cel., pp.30-31)





As far as love is concerned, the brief moments of delight are not worth the trouble of courtship:

¡O que plaga! ¡O que enojo! ¡O que fastio es conferir con ellas, mas de aquel breue tiempo que aparejadas son a deleyte!  
(Cel., p.32)

Far from being ennobling, far from being the ultimate happiness, love is destructive and a sin against God. Sempronio muses about God's mysterious ways in having created love:

¡O soberano Dios, quan altos son tus misterios! ¡Quanta premia posiste en al amor, que es necessaria turbacion en el amante!... Mandaste al hombre por la muger dexar el padre y la madre, agora no solo aquello, mas a ti y a tu ley desamparan, como agora Calisto. Del qual no me marauillo, pues los sabios, los santos, los profetas, por el te oluidaron.  
(Cel., p.28)

Love thus makes even philosophers, saints and prophets forget the Lord.

The medieval débat was designed to teach a particular doctrine by completely demolishing the argument of the opposing doctrine. The allegorical figure upholding the negative, so to speak, generally ended up by abjectly admitting his errors. The author of Act I could not follow this procedure, however, since it would obviously interfere with the plot. Sempronio delivers his learned and often spirited attack on love and women and then proceeds to do everything in his power to help his master do the very thing which he had attacked. Calisto cannot be made to see the error of his ways as there would then be no story.

Nevertheless the proper moral point of view is no less clear, if less sincere, than in a medieval débat. Calisto's courtly love is not meant to be taken seriously; it is a caricature, a satire. No opportunity is lost to make Calisto appear ridiculous. Returning home after having been rejected by Melibea, Calisto decides to take to his bed in the best tradition of the love sick suitor:



Cierra la ventana, y dexa la tiniebla acompañar al triste, y al desdichado la ceguedad. Mis pensamientos tristes no son dignos de luz.

(Cel., p.24)

He soon tires of this, however, and calls for his lute, sings a few lines, then commands Sempronio to sing the saddest song he knows. Sempronio quickly detects the reason for his master's condition and makes fun of him at every opening. When Calisto proclaims Melibea to be his God, Sempronio makes a crude joke:

Sempronio: ¡Ha, ha, ha! ¿Oystes que blasfemia? ¿Vistes que ceguedad?

Calisto: ¿De que te ries?

Sempronio: Riome que no pensaua que auia peor inuencion de pecado que en Sodoma.

Calisto: ¿Como?

Sempronio: Porque aquellos procuraron abominable vso con los angeles no conocidos, y tu con el que confiessas ser Dios.

(Cel., p.29)

This makes Calisto himself laugh and reduces the courtly vision of a deified Melibea to an obscenity. Sempronio, furthermore, is not afraid to make unpleasant jokes about Calisto's family such as the story that Calisto's grandmother had had illicit relations with an ape. Another device used effectively to destroy Calisto's dignity is the half overheard rude remark, which is then repeated more politely. When Calisto asks Sempronio to listen to his description of Melibea, the following exchange takes place:

Sempronio: ¿Que mentiras y que locuras dira agora este cavtiuio de mi amo!

Calisto: ¿Como es esso?

Sempronio: Dixe que digas, que muy gran plazer aure de lo oyr. Assi te medre Dios como me sera agradable esse sermon.

(Cel., p.33)

During the course of the description, when Calisto says that Melibea's locks are so beautiful that they turn men into stone, Sempronio makes another joke:

Sempronio: ¡Mas en asnos!

Calisto: ¿Que dizes?

Sempronio: Dixe que essos tales no serian cerdas de asno.

(Cel., p.33)



Calisto's courtly speech is thus continually undermined by Sempronio's remarks and asides. It is also undermined by sheer inappropriateness. When Calisto, waiting at his window with Pármeno, sees Celestina coming down the road, he breaks out in a rapturous eulogy of the evil old hag which is extremely comical:

¡O Parmeno! ¡Ya la veo! ¡Sano soy, viuo soy! ¡Mira que reuerenda persona; que acatamiento! Por la mayor parte, por la filosomia es conocida la virtud interior. ¡O vejez virtuosa! ¡O virtud enuejecida!

(Cel., p.47)

In short, Calisto as a courtly lover leaves a great deal to be desired, and the concept of love which he represents is obviously one which the author was attempting to discredit.

At the same time Sempronio is not the most convincing proponent of the other side of the debate. We have indicated that in view of the plot the author could not have Sempronio maintain a strictly moral position, but there is an underlying cynicism about Sempronio and indeed throughout the act which destroys its effectiveness as a moral example. Sempronio, although well versed in the moral judgements of Aristotle, Seneca, Boethius and Origen, is himself a lover and Calisto loses no time in reminding him of this fact:

Torpe cosa es mentir el que enseña a otro; pues que tu te precias de loar a tu amiga Elicia.

Sempronio can only weakly reply:

Haz tu lo que bien digo, y no lo que mal hago.

(Cel., p.29)

Then Sempronio makes no real effort to dissuade Calisto from involving himself in the love affair. The scholastic arguments against love only serve to intensify Calisto's infatuation, and Sempronio abandons them with no real sign of regret and instead offers to help Calisto win Melibea before Calisto indicates that such help might be materially





rewarding. Sempronio's about face does not seem, therefore, to be initially motivated by hope of profit but by a basically cynical attitude.

The net effect of the debate is on the whole negative. The author certainly had little sympathy for the tradition of courtly love which was so popular during the second half of the fifteenth century and which probably resulted in a great many young men affecting the manners of the lover<sup>1</sup>, and he certainly knew the rules of Christian morality; but he does not seem to have sincerely believed in them. He was laughing out of both sides of his mouth.

This negativism prepares the ground for the creation of the character of Celestina, who represents the antithesis of the idealism of both courtly love and Christian morality.

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1. Rojas states in the letter that his native land (presumably Castille, or the province of Toledo) had great need of the work he had discovered because of the quantity of enamored young men it possessed:

.... me venia a la memoria no solo la necesidad que nuestra comun patria tiene de la presente obra, por la muchedumbre de galanes y enamorados mancebos que posee...

(Cel., p.3)



### CHAPTER III

#### CELESTINA

The dialogue between Calisto and Sempronio reveals the author's medieval heritage. With Celestina, however, a new spirit is immediately apparent. The moment she appears on the scene, when Sempronio goes to fetch her following the débat, didacticism gives way and personality dominates. Everything is subordinated to the characterization of Celestina. The love story and its moral purpose is placed in the background; instead there is Celestina, alive, believable, overwhelming, triumphant. By the end of the act something new in literature has been created: the supreme individual, three-dimensional and psychologically real.

The sure touch with which the basic lines of Celestina's character are sketched in the initial scene is worthwhile describing. To review the circumstances briefly, Sempronio has volunteered to fetch Celestina, the professional go-between, for his master. Celestina lives with several young girls, her "pupils", among whom is Elicia, Sempronio's beloved. As Sempronio arrives, Elicia is entertaining another lover, Crito. A crisis is in the making. But Celestina handles it masterfully:

Celestina: ¡Albricias, albricias! ¡Elicia! ¡Sempronio, Sempronio!

Elicia: ¡Ce, ce, ce!

Celestina: ¿Porque?

Elicia: Porque esta aqui Crito.

Celestina: Metelo en la camarilla de las escobas. ¡Presto! Dile que viene tu primo y mi familiar.

(Cel., p.36)

Without hesitation Celestina provides the solution to the problem: where to hide the lover and what excuse to make to him. Now ready for Sempronio she greets him with honeyed words:





Celestina: ¡Hijo mio! ¡Rey mio! Turbado me has. No te puedo hablar. Torna y dame otro abraço. ¿Y tres días podiste estar sin vernos? ¡Elicia, Elicia! ¡Catale aquí!

(Cel., p.36)

This torrent of flattery together with delaying tactics - "come give me another embrace" - does not quite prevent Sempronio from overhearing the hastily retreating footsteps of the rival, and he demands to know who it is. Elicia brazenly replies that it is a lover, but Celestina wants no trouble and tries to cover up by saying that Elicia is out of her mind - from grief at Sempronio's prolonged absence:

¡Anda aca! Dexa esta loca; que es liuiana y turbada de tu ausencia, sacasla agora de seso. Dira mill locuras. Ven y hablemos. No dexemos passar el tiempo en balde.

(Cel., p.37)

Sempronio is still suspicious and Celestina has by now had time to think up a good excuse for the mysterious footsteps: they belong to a girl entrusted to Celestina by a friar - the fat friar who preaches. Sempronio grudgingly accepts the explanation and the potentially dangerous situation is averted. Celestina is now ready to listen to the purpose of Sempronio's visit. This he describes briefly, not forgetting to mention the considerable financial rewards which may be gained from the affair if properly handled. Celestina seems to be two steps ahead of Sempronio. In one breath she approves the scheme, in another she has already planned her tactics:

Bien has dicho, al cabo estoy. Basta para mi mecer el ojo. Digo que me alegro desas nuevas, como los cirujanos de los descalabrados. Y como aquellos dañan en los principios las llagas y encarescen el prometimiento de la salud, assi entiendo yo hazer a Calisto. Alargarle he la certenidad del remedio, porque, como dizen, el esperanza luenga aflige el coracon; y quanto el la perdiere, tanto gela promete. Bien me entiendes!

(Cel., p.39)

During this brief scene all the major characteristics of Celestina are touched on: her unscrupulousness, her coolness in a crisis,



her quick practical intelligence, her love of intrigue, her skill at flattery, her colorful speech bristling with proverbs. She has come to life completely in the course of a page and a half of dialogue, a feat equalled only by the greatest writers of comedy, a Shakespeare or a Molière.

The ensuing scenes are given over to a profound characterization of Celestina. In the first of these scenes Celestina does not appear at all. Instead she is intimately described by Pármeno, another of Calisto's servants, who warns his master against the old woman. Pármeno describes Celestina's house, her occupations, her belongings (including an interminable catalogue of cosmetics), her way of life, with such wealth and detail and with such authenticity it seems impossible that a Celestina did not, in reality, exist:

Tiene esta buena dueña al cabo de la ciudad, alla cerca de las tenerias, en la cuesta del rio, vna casa apartada, medio caydo, poco compuesta y menos abastada. Ella tenia seys officios, conuiene saber: labranderia, perfumera, maestra de hazer afeytes y de hazer virgos, alcahueta y un poquito hechizera. Era el primer officio cobertura de los otros, so color del qual muchas moças destas siruientes entrauan en su casa a labrarse...

(Cel., p.4)

Following Pármeno's description, Celestina, who has arrived with Sempronio, is invited into Calisto's house. Having overheard Pármeno's warnings about her evil character she realizes that he must be won over and contrives to be alone with him. The scene that results is the most dramatic of the act as Celestina turns the loyal but naïve Pármeno into a willing collaborator. Her powers of persuasion are extraordinary. She flatters, but not too obviously. She refers to his manhood (he is scarcely more than a boy), to his good looks and intelligence. She eulogizes the necessity of love and the advantages of an hedonistic life. Her arguments are entirely reasonable, but she



is quite prepared to shift from one line of reasoning to a contrary one if it seems politic. Her one serious set-back - when it turns out that Pármeno knows her all too well, having lived with her and served her as a young boy - she turns into an advantage by concocting the story that his father had left a treasure and had entrusted Celestina with the secret of its whereabouts and had furthermore made her Pármeno's guardian. Finally, when Pármeno begins to waver, Celestina brings out her trump card: Elicia (Sempronio's beloved) has a cousin, Areusa, whom, Celestina implies, she can easily obtain for Pármeno's pleasure. By coincidence - or perhaps the cunning Celestina had somehow guessed it - Areusa is the very girl the young man secretly admired. From then on Pármeno is lost, and, although he makes a final effort to resist the old woman's arguments, in the end he agrees to join Celestina and Sempronio in their plan to enrich themselves at Calisto's expense.

Calisto now returns with Sempronio and gives Celestina an extravagant initial payment of one hundred pieces of gold. The conspirators are jubilant at the successful beginning of the intrigue and the act comes to an end.

From an artistic point of view the importance of the first act is unquestionably Celestina. She emerges as a fully created personality and nothing that Rojas adds to her character in the rest of the play is really essential. Had the fragment remained unfinished, Celestina would still rank as one of the most powerful and boldly conceived characters of all literature. On the other hand, compared to Celestina, the other figures of the act are insignificant. Calisto and Melibea are imitations, almost parodies, of the heroes and heroines of the sentimental novels of the period; Sempronio is an incongruous combination of a pedant or moralist and a picaresque rogue. The same divergence in





literary merit is evident in the style. With Celestina the author seems to have been inspired. Her language, while not entirely free of artificialities, for the most part reflects the colorful, sometimes coarse speech of the people. She is a great representative of the earthy realism which is so characteristic of Spanish literature. When Celestina is not on the scene the dialogue is generally pompous and artificial with only occasional flashes of the vitality that characterizes the old go-between. Compare the following passages:

Sempronio: La perseuerencia en el mal no es constancia, mas dureza o pertinacia la llaman en mi tierra. Vosotros los filosofos de Cupido llamalda como quiserdes.

Calisto: Torpe cosa es mentir el que enseña a otro; pues que tu precias de loar a tu amiga Elicia.

Sempronio: Haz tu lo que bien digo, y no lo que mal hago.

(Cel., p.29)

Celestina: ¿Que diras a esto, Parmeno? ¡Nesçuelo, loquito, angelico, perlica, simplezico! ¿Lobitos en tal gesto? Llegate aca, putico, que no sabes nada del mundo ni de sus deleytes. ¡Mas rauia mala me mate si te llego a mi, avnuque vieja! Que la boz tienes ronca, las baruas te apuntan. Mal sosegadilla deues tener la punta de la barriga.

Parmeno: ¡Como cola de alacran!

Celestina: Y aun peor; que la otra muerde sin hinchar, y la tuya hincha por nueve meses.

In the first passage Sempronio and Calisto exchange pedantic sayings, appropriate perhaps for Calisto, who is of gentle birth, but hardly for Sempronio, who belongs to the lower classes. The relationship between the master and servant is unclear; they talk to each other as equals, and in fact Sempronio's attitude is more that of a somewhat supercilious friend than a servant's. In the second passage Celestina's speech is lively and colorful, and, what is more important, characteristic: there is no doubt that Celestina is speaking, whereas Calisto, Sempronio, and Parmeno often sound exactly alike.

But if Celestina expresses the genius of the author, the débat and the initial scene with Melibea are a truer measure of the



tradition to which he belongs. There are, of course, antecedents to Celestina in classical and medieval literature, but only as a type: for example the "lenas" in the comedies of Plautus and the "trotaconventos" in the fourteenth century Libro de Buen Amor, by Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita. As a personality Celestina is entirely new, an original creation stemming not from a tradition but from the inventiveness of the author.

Furthermore there are indications that Celestina was largely improvised as the author wrote. This improvisation is apparent from the way Pármene is introduced in the act. Pármene's sole purpose is to contribute to the characterization of Celestina. He does this first of all by giving the long description of the old woman, which serves as a background portrait, and secondly by acting as a foil for Celestina's philosophy of life and her persuasive skills. His function as a servant to Calisto is completely incidental. His specific duties are unknown, whereas Sempronio takes care of the horses and falcons, looks after his master's bedroom, plays the lute, sings, and generally acts as a trusted factotum.

Now Pármene himself was obviously not originally planned. He is never mentioned in the long scene between Calisto and Sempronio - where it would surely have been natural to mention another servant. He appears suddenly, quite unexpectedly, after Celestina's initial scene, and everything about him gives the impression of being hastily improvised.

For example, the scene in which Pármene describes Celestina seems contrived. Sempronio and Celestina have returned to Calisto's house and knock at the door. Calisto, desperately anxious to see the





old woman, whom he regards as his saviour, orders Pármeno to hurry and open the door. Instead Pármeno announces that there is an old whore at the door, and conceives it to be his duty to warn his master against her by giving a colorful but extremely long description of her, while Calisto presumably forgets his impatience and Sempronio and Celestina presumably are quite content to wait at the door without making any further attempts to make their presence known. In an obvious effort to make his forbearance seem more realistic, Calisto is represented as having concealed the purpose of Celestina's visit from Pármeno: to cut Pármeno's description short would give the show away. This device, however, leads to a contradiction later, as Pármeno, in his scene with Celestina, does know of the affair, although at no point could he have learned of it.

If Pármeno, whose raison d'être is the characterization of Celestina, is improvised, it follows that Celestina was improvised as well. What seems to have happened is that the author began with the original intention of writing a satirical comedy in condemnation of women and the kind of love which was expressed in the fashionable sentimental novels and poetry of the time. For purposes of plot he introduced a go-between. As he outlined Celestina's basic characteristics in her initial scene with Sempronio the author (we may imagine) for the first time became aware of the great dramatic potential of such a character and decided to abandon, for a while, the conventional themes he had begun. At this point, then, he decided to introduce another character, Pármeno, in order to provide a background portrait and a conflict for Celestina.

In conclusion, Celestina is an anomaly: from the point of



view of artistic value, the importance of the first act is in her characterization; from the point of view of theme and tradition Celestina is extraneous, an accidental growth on the main body of the work. Having placed Celestina in this perspective, we shall examine in the following chapter the literary traditions which are fundamental to the first act.



## CHAPTER IV

### TRADITION

The fragment which is conserved as the first act of La Celestina was, in our view, intended to be a comedy satirizing courtly love and written from an anti-feminist point of view. Calisto is a courtly lover made to seem ridiculous and blasphemous. Melibea, as far as can be determined from her brief appearance in the act, has the characteristics of a typical Lady in courtly love - beautiful, noble, inaccessible, haughty, even a little cruel<sup>1</sup>. Anti-feminism is implied in the satirical treatment of a tradition which idealizes the woman, but it is also expressed openly in the act through Sempronio's speeches. The characterization of Celestina has anti-feminist traits as well. She possesses a large collection of cosmetics and the use of cosmetics was a favourite anti-feminist target. Furthermore she is incomparably more evil and degenerate than the male characters in the act: Sempronio is unscrupulous, Calisto a fool and Pármeno naïve and corruptible, but Celestina is really evil.

Both courtly love and anti-feminism are traditions having considerable influence on the literature of fifteenth century Spain. Courtly love, as is well known, has its origins in the poetry of the Provençal troubadours in the early twelfth century and spread rapidly to northern France and to Italy, expressing itself in such forms as the roman courtois and the poetry which led to the dolce stil nuovo. Its penetration in Spain was much slower. Catalonia, to be sure, being a

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1. According to the rules of courtly love the lover must suffer for a period of "apprenticeship" in the service of love, therefore the Lady must initially reject the lover.





neighbor of Provence and having a similar language, was influenced by courtly love as early as the twelfth century (although an important school of courtly love poetry did not develop until the end of the fourteenth century, and its greatest poet, Ausias March, wrote in the early fifteenth century), and there was a tradition of courtly love in Galician poetry by the fourteenth century, but in Castillian literature the themes of courtly love do not appear to have developed until the fifteenth century.

The first true courtly love literature in Spanish coincided roughly with the appearance of the Cancionero de Baena (before 1445)<sup>2</sup>. This is a collection of lyric poetry which is based on Galician and Italian models and closely follows the courtly love tradition. For the next hundred years, and particularly during the latter part of the fifteenth century, courtly love is one of the prevailing themes of Spanish literature. It expresses itself in the genre known as the novela sentimental, or love stories in prose<sup>3</sup>, in the immensely popular novelas de caballería (essentially romans courtois) and, of course, in the poetry.

The titles of some of the more popular works of the period are in themselves indicative of the prevalence of the concept of courtly love:

Prose:     El Siervo Libro de Amor, by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón (c. 1440)  
              Cárcel de Amor, by Diego de San Pedro (1492)

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1. The celebrated Libro de Buen Amor (1343) by Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, shows a knowledge of courtly love particularly in the description of Doña Endrina, but it is by no means fundamental to the work.
  2. See O. H. Green, Courtly Love in the Spanish Cancioneros, Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America, Vol. LXIV, pp.247-301.
  3. See Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. III, Chap.VI, pp.3-88.



Tratado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda, enderezado a las damas de la reina doña Isabel; en el qual halláran cartas y razonamientos de amores de mucho primor y gentileza, by Diego de San Pedro (1491).

Poetry: Los Diez Mandamientos de Amor, by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón (c. 1440)  
Orden de Amor, by Juan de Mena (c. 1440).

These titles are typical of the tradition of courtly love: a love story is dedicated to the court ladies and contains, it is promised, arguments or "reasonings" about love; love is conceived as a service, or a prison, or a religious order, or as having its own decalogue. The following lines from a sonnet by the Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458), who was a popular poet as well as a famous humanist, are a pure expression of courtly love:

Quando yo so delante de aquella donna  
a cuya mano me sojudgo Amor,  
cuydo ser uno de los que en Tabor  
vieron la gran claror que se racona.

The lover, enslaved by the god of Love, compares the splendour of his Lady to the transfiguration of Christ (on Mt. Tabor), much as Calisto compares the sight of Melibea to the beatific vision.

The popularity of courtly love, with its exaggerations and sometimes heretical implications, made it a natural target for attack and satire during the second half of the fifteenth century, and it is from this negative point of view that Act I of La Celestina belongs to the tradition of courtly love. Calisto is basically a caricature modelled on the lovers in the poetry and novela sentimental of the period. He is not intended to be a serious hero, any more than Don Quixote is a serious hero of the novels of chivalry. He serves as an example of the silliness as well as the blasphemy of courtly love.

The anti-feminism in Act I of La Celestina follows a tradition based on much older literary models than courtly love. Aristotle gave expression to it in his philosophy; Juvenal wrote bitterly against





women in his Satires. During the middle-ages anti-feminist works were popular, especially during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although it is difficult to trace the origins of the tradition in Spain with any degree of accuracy - did it come directly through the classical authors and the clergy or indirectly through later medieval authors? - certain works seem to have had considerable influence.

The earliest medieval anti-feminist work which was definitely known in Spain is the third book of Andreas Capellanus' De Amore. This is a virulent attack on the destructive power of love and the evil nature of women. It was composed towards the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century. The first two books are an extensive treatise on the theory of courtly love. In the third book Andreas reverses his position completely. Women are not creatures to be idealized and love is not a transcendent good; instead women are vile and love is the root of all evil:

Quam igitur omnia sequantur ex amore nefanda nullumque inde bonum evenire cognoscatur sed infinitas hominibus procedere poenas, cur, stulte iunvenis, guaris amari et te Dei gratia et aeterna hereditate privare?<sup>1</sup>

Why, young man do you love and deprive yourself of your eternal heritage?

As for women,

Ad haec mulier omnis non solum naturaliter repetitur avara, sed etiam invida et aliarum maledica, rapax, ventris obsequio dedito, inconstans...<sup>2</sup>

One is reminded of Sempronio's words:

...quien te contaria sus mentiras, sus trafagos, sus cambios, su liuiandad...

(Cel., p.31)

Andreas' treatise apparently came to Spain through Catalonia, and the first two books were translated at the court of King Juan of Aragón, probably

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1. Andreas Capellanus, De Amore, ed. S. Battaglia, Rome, 1947, p.384.

2. Andreas Capellanus, op. cit., p.394.



between 1387 and 1389<sup>1</sup>. It is not clear whether the third book was known or translated at this time (the parts of medieval manuscripts were sometimes circulated separately) but in any case some forty-five years later the Archpriest of Talavera made extensive use of it, largely basing the first book of his anti-feminist tract on Andreas' work.

Probably more widely known than the De Amore was Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium. This was Boccaccio's most popular work throughout the fifteenth century in Spain, and was actually better known than his vernacular works<sup>2</sup>. De Casibus is not strictly anti-feminist, the general theme being the precariousness of earthly existence and the necessity of looking towards heavenly rather than earthly salvation. This theme is copiously illustrated by the history of the falls of great men. Many of these falls are due to women: Adam, Samson, Agamemnon, Paris all fall from their high estate due to the banal influence of women, and Boccaccio's anti-feminist bias is very much in evidence. He devotes a chapter, entitled In mulieris (against women) to describing the vices of women much in the same style as Andreas:

Amarissimum quippe animal est foemina, iracundem, infidele, libidinosum, truculentum, vani potius quam certi avidum.

De Casibus is an important source for the didactic literature of the period. "Juan Bocacio" and the "Caydas" are mentioned continually by the humanists such as the Marqués de Santillana and the theologians such

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1. See the introduction to the English translation of the De Amore by J. J. Parry, New York, 1941, p.23.
  2. Professor Arturo Farinelli, in Italia e Spagna makes the following statement about the work: "Libro d'oro il De Casibus per i letterati e moralisti di Spagna, ripieno di 'muchos buenos enxemplos et de buenas doctrinas para bien vivir espiritualmente et moral et honestamente', non meno delle consultatissime e venerandissime Memorabilie di Valero Massimo; e fu, con tutta probabilità, la prima opera del Boccaccio che li Spagnuoli ebbero tra mani". (A. Farinelli, Italia e Spagna, Torino, 1929, Vol.I, pp.106-107).





as Fra Martín de Córdoba<sup>1</sup>. The Archpriest of Talavera knew the work well, and, next to the De Amore, it is his most important source<sup>2</sup>. Even the poets found occasion to allude to the Florentine's tragic record of the falls of men, as in the following lines from the Coplas of Jorge Manrique (1440?-1479):

Estos reyes poderosos  
que vemos por escripturas  
ya passadas  
con casos tristes, llorosos  
fueron sus buenas venturas  
trastornadas  
Assi que no ay cosa fuerte<sup>3</sup>.

Boccaccio's most popular vernacular work was also anti-feminist in theme - the celebrated Corbaccio. Like the De Casibus this work was quoted and used by the moralists who were apparently unaware or inured to the crudity of Boccaccio's libel of women. The Corbaccio was particularly influential in Catalonia<sup>4</sup> and is an obvious source of such Catalan works as the Somni of Bernat Metge.

Another famous work which no doubt had its influence in the anti-feminist literature of Spain was the Roman de la Rose. This thirteenth century narrative poem is the work of two authors. The first part, by Guillaume de Lorris, is an allegory of courtly love; however, the second part, written a generation later by Jean de Meung, is totally different in tone and contains passages written in bitter condemnation of love and women. The Roman de la Rose was perhaps not as widely read in Spain as the works of Boccaccio, but it was nevertheless well known and much admired by such fifteenth century men of letters as the Marqués de

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1. A. Farinelli, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

2. See E. v. Richthofen, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo und sein Arcipreste de Talauera, Halle, 1941, p.63.

3. Cancionero general de Castilla, Sociedad de Bibliofilios edition, II, p.361.

4. A. Farinelli, op. cit., p. 267.





Santillana, who included it in his famous library<sup>1</sup>.

Spanish anti-feminist literature, in spite of the many models and sources available, is less extensive than the corresponding literature of courtly love<sup>2</sup>. The obvious explanation is that anti-feminism has a more limited appeal than romances and poetry, and the moralists for whose benefit anti-feminist literature was presumably written could turn to the established foreign books. Anti-feminism in poetry seems to have been limited to a handful of works: Juan de Tapia's Glosa (c. 1440), the Coplas de las Calidades de las Doñas of Pedro Torrellas (c. 1440), Íñigo López de Mendoza's Dictado en Vituperio de las malas Mugerres y Alabanza de las buenas (c. 1480), and the Versos of Hernán Mexia (c. 1490), which is an imitation of Torrellas' Coplas. Of these poets Torrellas is perhaps the only sincere anti-feminist. Both Juan de Tapia and Hernán Mexia seem to have written at the bequest of a lady or ladies (according to the rules of courtly love one cannot disobey even the most capricious and contradictory of the beloved's commands) and Fray Íñigo's verses are obviously more of a rhetorical exercise than a condemnation of the feminine sex.

In prose there are three works during the fifteenth century which may be regarded as anti-feminist in nature. The first act of La Celestina is, as we have said, essentially anti-feminist. The Arcipreste de Talauera (1438), by Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, is also basically anti-feminist (although the Archpriest's social criticism is not limited to the misbehaviour of women). A third work which belongs to this grouping is the Repetición de Amores (before 1497) by Luis de Lucena. Greatly

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1. See F. B. Luquiens, The Roman de la Rose and medieval Castillian literature, Romanische Forschungen, XX, p.284 ff.

2. See J. Ornstein, Introduction to Luis de Lucena's Repetición de Amores, in University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, No. 23, 1954.



inferior to the other two in terms of literary value<sup>1</sup>, the Repetición is nevertheless of great interest as a document of the intellectual background of the period. Furthermore as an anti-feminist work roughly contemporary with La Celestina it is pertinent to our study of anti-feminism in the first act.

The Repetición was first published together with a treatise on chess, also by Luis de Lucena. Since the treatise on chess is dedicated to Prince Juan who died in 1497 we may assume that the Repetición was also composed some time before this date. In the preface to the work the author states that he had written in service to a beautiful woman, his beloved, in the most famous University of Salamanca<sup>2</sup>. The Repetición is actually a form of dissertation. Ornstein remarks that a "repeticion" meant an "exhaustive study of a given topic prepared according to the strictest scholarly standards of the time. It was distinguished by its preeminently learned character and by considerable documentary appendage and citations from authorities"<sup>3</sup>. Twenty-seven Greek and Latin authors are in fact quoted and in addition there is wide scale plagiarism of more contemporary works.

The theme of the Repetición is identical with the anti-feminist themes developed in such works as the De Amore and the Arcipreste de Talauera. Love is an evil with catastrophic effects on those who succumb to it; it is a disease which must be cured. The object of love, the

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1. Menéndez y Pelayo makes the following comment on the Repetición: "...bien se conoce que es ensayo poco maduro de escolar". (Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. II, p.55).
  2. "En servicio de la linda dama su amiga, estudiando en el preclarísimo estudio de Salamanca". (Luis de Lucena, Repetición de Amores, Ornstein ed., in University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages, No. 23, 1954, p.1).
  4. Ornstein, op. cit., p.2.





woman, is correspondingly depraved. After traditional introductory apologies and dedications the Repetición begins with a more or less accurate translation of the first part of De Duobus Amantibus, the very popular early fifteenth century latin work by Aeneas Silvio Piccolimini (later Pope Pius II). De Duobus Amantibus is a love story written in epistolary form. Letters between the lover and the lady are carried back and forth by an old woman who has some of the characteristics of Celestina. She is disreputable, greedy and crafty, but her role is limited and she cannot be considered a real precursor of Celestina. The lady greets the initial letters from the lover with fury and at this point Lucena abandons the De Duobus Amantibus and the narrative form and writes a series of more or less connected essays on love and women. He borrows heavily from a treatise by Condestable Pedro de Portugal on the attributes of the God Cupid. Another heavy borrowing is an essay by Alfonso Madrigal del Tostado, entitled Como al Hombre es necessario amar a la Muger. The final part of the Repetición consists of a débat on the question of whether it is better to be a man of arms than a man of letters. Out of this hodgepodge of humanistic learning and pedantry - Aristotle is quoted by name no less than thirty-seven times, Cicero nineteen, Seneca twelve, Ovid nine and twenty-two other authorities are appealed to (although Plato and Petrarch are conspicuously absent) - the main theme of the evil nature of love issues forth like a leitmotiv.

There is a remarkable similarity between the concepts, and in many cases the words themselves, in the Repetición and the first act of La Celestina. Lucena uses the metaphor of love as a sickness over and over again:

Es el amor una llaga o passion o enfermedad muy mala  
de curar...

(Rep., p.59)



Donde Parmeno en el Terencio dezia: "O dios y que enfermedad es questa, que asi los hombres se muden qu ningun conosse ser aquellos que antes quienquiera conoscia."

(Rep., p.73)

Assi que, quienquiera que el amor sirva, sepa que esta enfermo y procure sanar.

(Rep., p.73)

In the first act of La Celestina the idea of love as a disease is also used:

Sempronio: ... No es mas menester, bien se de que pie coxqueas. Yo te sanare.

Calisto: Increyble cosa prometes.

Sempronio: Antes facil; que el comienço de la salud es conoscer el hombre la dolencia del enfermo.

(Cel., p.28)

Celestina: ... E como aquellos (cirujanos) dañan en los principios las llagas y encarecen el prometimiento de salud, assi entiendo yo fazer a Calisto. Alargarle he la certenidad del remedio, porque, como dizen, el esperança luenga aflige el coraçon, y quanto el la perdiere, tanto ge la permite.

(Cel., p.39)

Celestina: ... ¡O maluado, como que no se te entiende! Tu no sientes su enfermedad. ¿Que has dicho hasta agora? ¿De que te quexas? Pues burla o di por verdad lo falso, e cree lo que quisieres; que el es enfermo por acto, y el poder ser sano es en mano desta flaca vieja.

(Cel., p.50)

The blasphemous nature of love is deplored in the Repetición:

Piensa pues, quanto estas partado de los mandamientos de Dios, que como devas a Dios de todo tu corazon amar, amas la criatura, y en aquella pones todo tu amor y delectacion, haziendote ydolatra. Que si quieres dezir la verdad, amas mas a tu amiga que a Dios...

(Rep., p.73)

In Act I of La Celestina this aspect of love is frequently expressed as may be recalled by Calisto's profession of faith:

¿Que burlo? Por Dios la creo, por Dios la confieso, e no creo que ay otro soberano en el cielo, avnque entre nosotros mora.

(Cel., p.29)

Lucena's diatribes against women are in the harsh tradition of Andreas

Capellanus and Boccaccio:



La muger es animal imperfecto, variable, engañoso, y a mil passiones sujeto, sin fee, sin temor, sin constancia, sin piedad, las quales, si una vegada desvian del camino, piensan que son libres para discurrir por donde bien las viene; que de ali adelante ni temen ni amigo ni marido.

(Rep., p.76)

La mala muger...no puede ser amada sin grande amargura, miedo, congoxa y infortunio...sin affligimiento y destruccion del cuerpo y del alma.

(Rep., p.84)

Es otrosi la muger principio de pecado, arma del diablo, expulsion del parayso, vivera de delictos, transgression de la ley, doctrina de perdicion, dessuelo muy sabida, amiga de discordia...

(Rep., P.85)

Sempronio's misogyny is similarly expressed:

Sempronio: Puesto que sea todo esso verdad, por ser tu hombre eres mas digno.

Calisto: ¿En que?

Sempronio: En que ella es imperfecto, por el qual defecto dessea y apetece a ti, y a otro menor que tu.

(Cel., p.34)

Sempronio: Que todo lo que piensan, osan sin deliberar. Sus dissimulaciones, su lengua, su engaño, su oluido...su desamor, su ingratitud, su inconstancia...por ellas es dicho: arma del diablo, cabeza de pecado destruccion de parayso.

(Cel., p.31)

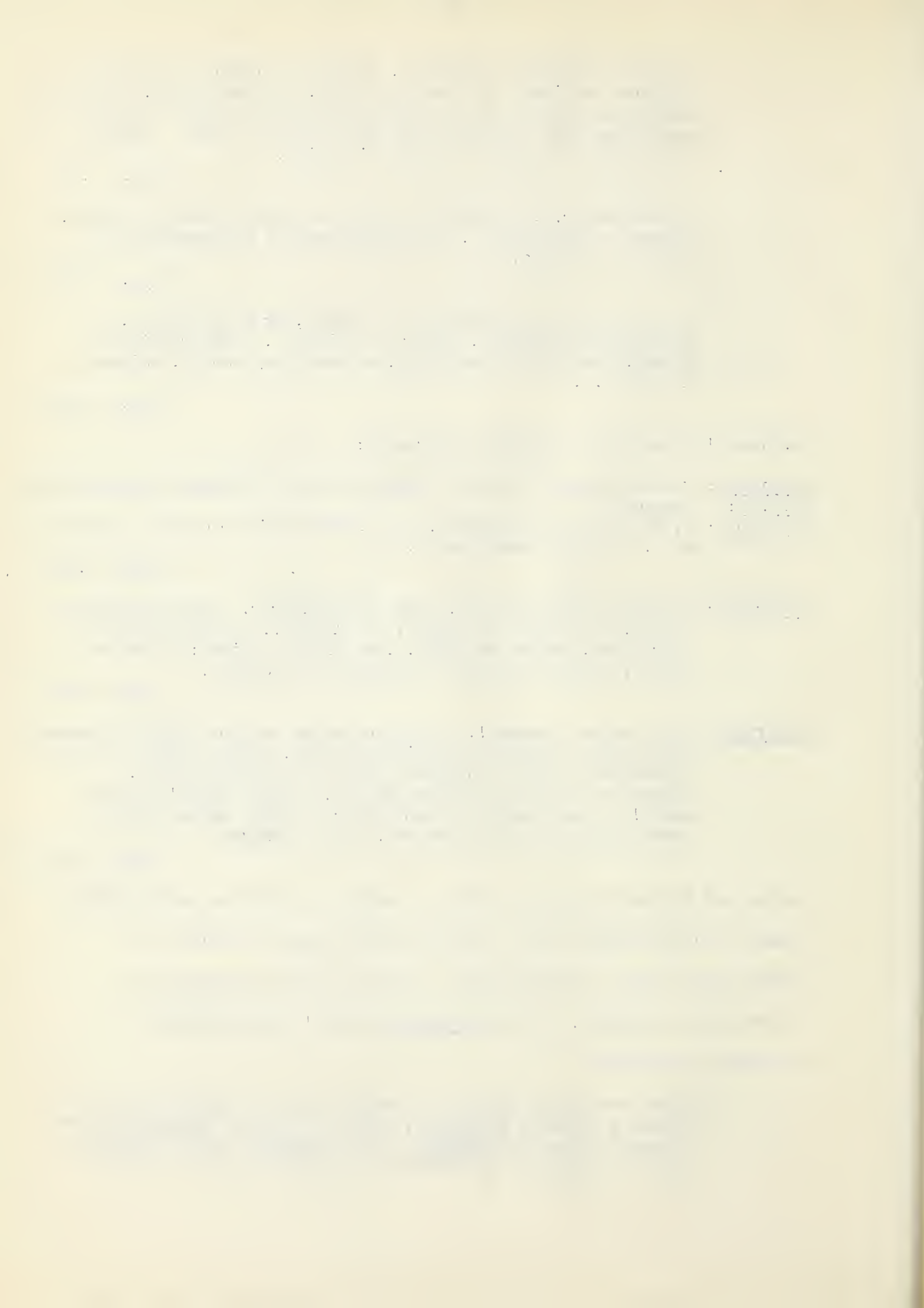
Sempronio: ¡Huye de sus engaños!...A los que meten por los agujeros denuestan en la calle. Combidan despiden, llaman, niegan, señalan amor, pronuncian enemiga, ensananse presto apaziguanse luego. Quieren que adeuinen lo que quieren. ¡O que plaga! ¡O que enojo! O que fastio es conferir con ellas, mas de aquel breve tiempo que son aparejadas son al deleyte.

(Cel., pp.31-32)

Lucena and the author of Act I have in common not only the same attitude towards love and women; they both have what might be called the "cataloguing" style of description: the long lists of objects in interminable sentences. In the Repetición women's cosmetics are described as follows:

¿Dime para que se affeyta la muger?...que ni dexan leche de burras y unguento argentado, unguento citrino, lanillas, mudas blanduras, agua de soliman, agua de rasuras, aguas serenadas, aguas de pampanos, de calabazas, azeite de mata, de uevos,





de trigo, de pepitas, de almendras amargas, dormideros, alvayalde, soliman, alcanfor, borra, esclarimiento, atincar, lanzarotes, angelotes, brasil, arina de avas, de altramuces, judiuelos, hava de mar, garvanzos negros, neguilla, alcool y atutia, y color, y grana de escarlata para adobar los labios.

(Rep., p.81)

Pármeno's famous description of Celestina's laboratory is very similar in feeling and even in some of the details:

...Fazia soliman, afeyte cozido, argentadas, bujelladas, cerillas, lanillas, vnturillas, lustres, lucentores; clarimientos, alualinos. Y otras aguas de rostro, de rasuras, de gamones, de corteza de spantalobos...Los azeytes que sacaua para el rostro, no es cosa de creer: de estoraque e de jazmin, de limon, de pepitas, de violetas de manjuy, de alfocigos, de neguilla, de altramuces, de aruejas y de carillas, y de yerua paxarera...

(Cel., pp.42-43)

Obviously the author of the first act of La Celestina and Luis de Lucena were influenced by much the same reading and had the same general theme of the reprobation of love and attack on women. Both quoted extensively from Aristotle and Seneca; both knew the Euneucus of Terence since Lucena quotes from it and the author of Act I uses it for the names of some of his characters; both knew the De Casibus of Boccaccio - Sempronio referring to caydas and Lucena translating nearly a whole chapter of De Casibus; both even quoted from the same Spanish author, Alfonso Madrigal del Tostado; and both apparently did not know or use the works of Petrarch. The two authors are spiritually akin, or perhaps they simply both came from the same intellectual environment.

Is it possible to show a closer connection? Was there a direct influence of one on the other? This is problematical. The most serious difficulty in establishing the theory of a direct influence is the question of chronology. The Repetición was written not later than 1497, as we have seen, because of the dedication to Prince Juan. Prince Juan, however, was only eighteen at the time of his death. Would a work on chess



which was published together with a work on love have been dedicated to the Prince as a child? It seems unlikely and therefore it is difficult to set the date of publication much earlier than the middle of the final decade of the fifteenth century. The first edition of La Celestina dates from 1499 but there is a strong possibility of an earlier edition<sup>1</sup>. It would not be unreasonable to date the Comedia in 1498 and this would then be the latest possible date of composition of the first act. However, there is every reason to believe that the first act was written considerably earlier than the rest of the play since the language is older. How much earlier is another question, and possibly an insoluble one, but it is possible that a decade or even two or three decades had elapsed before Rojas discovered it. Thus, while the Repetición may predate the first act of La Celestina, it seems more likely that it actually comes after it. In this event a direct connection between the two works would have to be in the nature of the influence of the first act on the Repetición. This is particularly difficult to establish. Although a great many phrases in the Repetición are similar to phrases in the first act, in every case a common source, such as Aristotle, Crisologo or Boccaccio can be shown. Furthermore Lucena reveals his debts quite clearly through outright plagiarism. A passage such as Sempronio's diatribe against women would have suited Lucena's purposes ideally had he known the first act. The style of the Repetición has very little in common with the earlier work. Some of Sempronio and Calisto's artificially constructed sentences and latinized words have a certain resemblance to Lucena's elaborate flowery style, but the author of the first act's genius for dialogue and popular realistic speech is nowhere in evidence in the Repetición. A final objection to the relationship is the probability that the manuscript of the first act was not in circulation until Rojas discovered it.

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1. See C. L. Penney, op. cit., p.94.





The importance of a comparative study of the Repetición and the first act of La Celestina is not to establish a direct relationship, but rather to give perspective to the first act. The first act is a work of unquestioned brilliance in its depiction of the character of Celestina, but in other respects it follows the traditional literary trends and this can be seen clearly by comparing it with the Repetición. For the Repetición, by virtue of its mediocrity, reveals completely its literary heritage; there is no art to distract. The catalogue of cosmetics, the diatribe against women, the frequent quotations from authorities, especially Aristotle and Seneca, the use of sources like the De Casibus, and even the contradictory currents of courtly love (since Lucena after all wrote the Repetición in service to his lady) are all simply stock in trade for a writer during the second half of the fifteenth century. The first act of La Celestina - all but the central character - becomes understandable and predictable if viewed in light of the Repetición and some of the anonymity of the author is removed. We are one step closer to the problem of the identity of author: we must look for him in the current of anti-feminist literature, looking back to Boccaccio, Andreas Capellanus, Juvenal and Aristotle, a man oriented more towards the middle ages than to the Renaissance, a man out of sympathy with the tradition of courtly love but well acquainted with it.

In the next chapter the possible identity of this author will be discussed.



CHAPTER V

THE ARCHPRIEST OF TALAVERA

If the anti-feminist literature of fifteenth century Spain was marked by the paucity of works it made up for it in quality. It produced the first act of La Celestina; and it produced the Arcipreste de Talauera which is one of the most important works in the history of Spanish prose. Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, the Archpriest of Talavera, composed the book which he "baptized", as he says, Arcipreste de Talauera (although it has been more commonly known as either the Corbacho or Reprobación del Amor Mundano), in 1438. He was at this time forty years of age as is stated at the beginning of the only manuscript which has survived<sup>1</sup>. The date of his death still has not been determined. There is a date on his tombstone - he is buried in the Cathedral of Toledo - which indicates that he died in 1460, but this is probably inaccurate, since a document has been discovered showing him to be still alive in 1466. Perhaps a final "X" on the latin numeral of the date was erased and he died in 1470, or perhaps the inscription on the tomb was made long after his death when the exact date had been forgotten. Only three other works are attributed to the Archpriest, all greatly inferior in quality to the Arcipreste de Talauera. These are an historical chronical, the Atalaya de las Corónicas, and two lives of saints.

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1. For biographical information on the Archpriest of Talavera, see E. v. Richthofen, op. cit., pp. 8-13; Comandante García Rey, El Arcipreste de Talavera, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, *Revista de la Biblioteca, Archivo y Museo (Ayuntamiento de Madrid)*, Vol. V, 1928, pp.298-306; and the Mario Penna edition of the Arcipreste de Talauera, Torino, 1955, introduction.



The Arcipreste de Talauera is a didactic work divided into four parts. The first is a "reprobation of love", largely based on the third book of Andreas Capellanus; the second is an attack on women, which appeared to the author the inevitable complement to the attack on love; the third part is a treatise on the "complexions" of men - sanguine, choleric, flegmatic and melancholic - based on the pseudo-Aristotelian Secreta Secretorum; and the last part is a brief astrological treatise which includes a débat between the allegorical figures of Poverty and Fortune based on a section of Boccaccio's De Casibus. We shall be primarily concerned with the first two parts.

The basic theme of the Arcipreste de Talauera is the catastrophic consequences of "disordered" love.<sup>1</sup> In the prologue the author sums it up as follows:

E como uno de los usados pecados es el amor desordenado, espeçialmente de las mugeres - por do se siguen discordias, omezillos, muertes, escándalos, guerras, e perdiçiones de bienes, e aun perdiçión de las personas, e, mucho más peor, perdiçión de las tristes ánimas, por el abominable carnal pecado, con amor junto desordenado - en tanto e ha tanto decaymiento es ya el mundo venido, que el moço syn hedat, el viejo fuera de hedad, ya aman las mugeres locamente.

(Arc. Tal., p.3)

The Archpriest then proceeds to illustrate and elaborate his theme with the greatest of detail and indeed with considerable repetition. The religious point of view, since the author is a priest, is naturally prominent, and the Archpriest takes pains to show that each of the ten

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1. The Archpriest, as is natural for a cleric, regards anything but Christian love as "disordered" (desordenado) or "mad" (loco). Since the medieval Christian concept of love is extremely narrow - the only acceptable love (we are not talking of love of God, of course) is between man and wife, and at that it must be without passion - not only excessive or mad love but any love which we would call "romantic" was an object of the Archpriest's disapproval, and this would naturally include any of the forms of courtly love.





commandments are broken because of love and that each of the seven sins can be attributed to the pernicious effects of love<sup>1</sup>.

The elements of the reprobation of love which were studied in the Repetición and in the first act of La Celestina are all present in the book of the Archpriest. Love leads to blasphemy:

Pues, dy, amigo, ¿que es la rrazón porque quieres tan locamente amar, pues asý es que, asý cerca Dios como acerca de los onbres es avido por rréprobo e blasfemo el tal amor?  
(Arc. Tal., p.18)

Pues, faser dioses estraños e ydolatrar, byen es cabsa el amor...  
(Arc. Tal., p.20)

Love is conceived as an illness:

Primeramente (el amor faze) la vista perder, e menguar el olor de las narizes natural; quel onbre apenas huele como solýa; el gusto de la boca pierde a aun el comer del todo; casy el oyr fallesçe; parésçe como que oye abejones en el oreja; la manos e todo el cuerpo pierden su exercyçio que tenían e comiençan de tenblar.  
(Arc. Tal., p.10)

A cure for love is suggested: since love is a fire it dries up the body and,

...do la tal sequedad se causa, conviene rremediar de contrario para su curación, pues los contrarios con contrarios son de curar, como dize Aristotiles.  
(Arc. Tal., p.33)

Men who contract the disease of love submit themselves and become slaves to women who are unworthy of them:

Quien es tan loco e fuera de seso que quiere su poderío dar a otro, e su lybertad someter a quien non deve, e querer ser siervo de una muger que alcança muy corto juyzio, e demás atarse de pies e manos, que non es de sí mesmo...  
(Arc. Tal., p.12)

Even great men and philosophers are ensnared by love. The Archpriest devotes a chapter to this subject, Como los letrados pierden el saber por amar, and describes the amorous misadventures of Aristotle, Virgil,

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1. We are using the word "love" here and henceforth in the Archpriest's sense of "disordered" or "mad".



St. Augustine, David, and a contemporary, one Bernad de Cabrera, "un onbre muy notable de casa rreal".

In the second part of the book the Archpriest begins his famous attack on women:

Aquí comienza la segunda parte deste libro en que dixe que se tractaría de los viçios, tachas e malas condiçiones de las malas e viçiosas mugeres, las buenas en sus virtudes aprovando.

The familiar litany of feminine vices is examined chapter by chapter with examples apparently drawn from the Archpriest's experience as well as from folklore and literary sources. Women are depicted as avaricious, envious, prone to gossip, indiscriminate, inconstant, disobedient, haughty, lying, drunken, insufferably talkative - but instead of only listing these vices as in De Casibus, the Repetición, Act I of La Celestina and the third book of Andreas' De Amore, the Archpriest uses his anti-feminist theme to produce a delightful, if somewhat roughly cut, series of exemplary stories which show a basic ability for narrative and dialogue and a sure ear for popular speech.

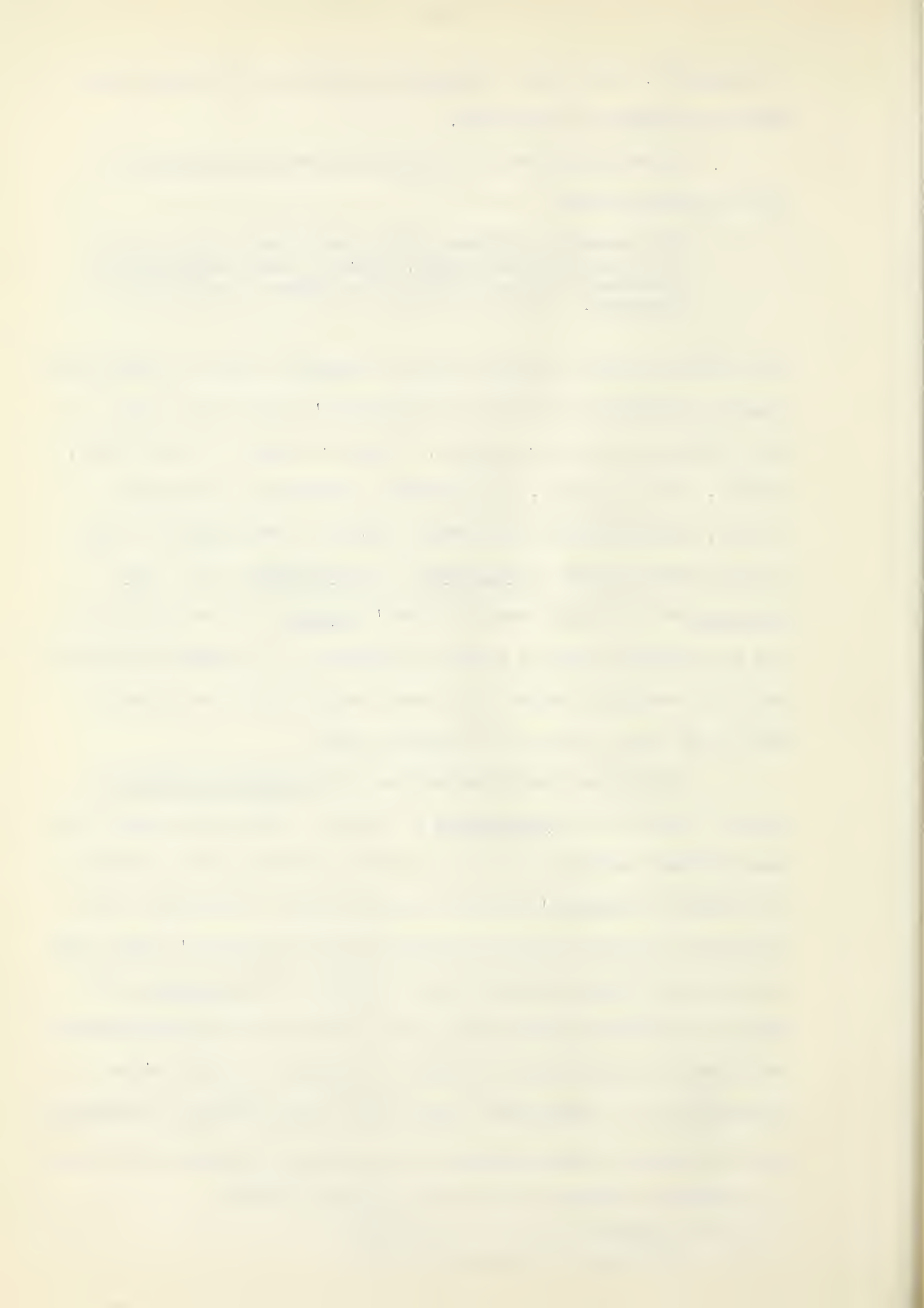
The general connection between the Arcipreste de Talauera and the first act of La Celestina is obvious. Both works contain the same attitude towards love as an evil to be avoided and as a disease to be cured. Sempronio's attack on women becomes a counterpart, less extensive, of course, of the second part of the Archpriest's book. Both works have the same tendency in use of sources: the De Casibus, the appeal to authorities such as Aristotle, and the Christian moral tracts. But there is a much closer connection. Menéndez y Pelayo<sup>1</sup>, Castro Guisasola<sup>2</sup>, E. v. Richthofen<sup>3</sup>, among others, have studied the influence

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1. Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 346-349.

2. Castro Guisasola, op. cit., pp. 172-176.

3. E. v. Richthofen, op. cit., pp. 106-114.





of the Arcipreste de Talavera on La Celestina as a whole. Each have noted, however, that the strongest influence is confined to the first act.

Sempronio's anti-feminist diatribe is the most obvious example of the Archpriest's influence on the first act. Sempronio urges his master to read the "histories" if he wishes to assure himself of the evil nature of women:

¿Escoziote? Lee los ystoriales, estudia los filosofos, mira los poetas. Llenos estan los libros de sus viles y malos exemplos, y de las caydas que lleuaron los que en algo, como tu, las reputaron. Oye a Salamon do dize que las mugeres y el vino hazen a los hombres renegar. Escucha al Aristotiles; mira a Bernardo...esta es la muger, antigua malicia que a Adan echo de los deleytes del parayso...

(Cel., pp.30-31)

Calisto replies that after all he is a lesser man than these famous people and how can he be expected to escape the clutches of women if they also failed:

Di, pues; esse Adan, esse Salamon, esse Dauid, esse Aristotiles, esse Virgilio, esos que dizes, ¿como se sometieron a ellas? ¿Soy mas que ellos?

(Cel., p.31)

This scene has come directly from the Archpriest's book:

Lee bien cómo fue Adam, Sansón, Davyd, Golyás, Salamón, Virgilio, Aristótiles, e otros dignos de memoria en saber e natural juyzio...

(Arc. Tal., p.13)

The proof of this debt is that Calisto makes a slip in his reply to Sempronio, for Sempronio had only mentioned Salamón, Aristótiles, Adan and Bernardo, whereas Calisto adds Dauid and Virgilio as if they had just been mentioned (esos que dizes), and omits Bernardo. Obviously the author was thinking of the Archpriest's list which is given in nearly the same order, with two additions. Furthermore Sempronio's mention of Bernardo seems to have also come from the Arcipreste de Talavera,



as it contains the only known account of the deception of a man called Bernardo - Bernad de Cabrera.

In keeping with the anti-feminist tradition the Archpriest has a long passage on women's cosmetics which is very similar to Pármeno's description of Celestina's laboratory quoted in the previous chapter:

Pero después de todo esto comienza a entrar por los ungüentos; anpolletas, potezillos, salseruelas donde tyenen las aguas para afeytar, unas para estirar el cuero, otras destiladas para rrelumbrar; tuétanos de ciervo, de vaca e de carnero. ¿E non son peores éstas que diablos, que, con las rreñonadas de ciervo fazen dellas xabón? Destilan el agua por cáñamo crudo e ceniza de sarmientos, e la rreñodada rretida al fuego... fazen más, agua de blanco de huevos cochos, estilada con mirra, cánfora, angelores, trementina con tres aguas, purificada e bien lavada que torna como la nieve blanca, rrayzes de lirios blancos, bórax fino: de todo esto fazen agua destillada con que rreluzen como espada. E, de las yemas cochas de los huevos, azeyte para las manos: en una caçuela traellos al fuego, rrociándolos con agua rrosada, e con un paño linpio e dos garrotes sacan el azeyte para las manos e la cara ablandar e purificar.<sup>1</sup>

(Arc. Tal., pp.90-91)

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1. Women's cosmetics were a recurring theme in Spanish literature during the fifteenth century and Pármeno's catalogue of cosmetics is not necessarily an imitation of the Archpriest of Talavera. The Archpriest himself was merely following Boccaccio's lead, as he acknowledges (E aun desto fabló Juan Bocacio - de los arreos de las mugeres, de sus tachas, e cómo las encubren). We have seen that Luis de Lucena includes a cosmetics passage in the Repetición de Amores and there are similar passages in two poems of the late fifteenth century: Diálogo entre el Amor y un Viejo (c. 1475), by Rodrigo Cota (one of the two authors suggested in the prefatory letter of La Celestina as being responsible for the first act), and Coplas de las Comadres (after 1480), by Rodrigo de Reinosa. A brief extract from these passages is sufficient to show their similarity to Pármeno's description, Lucena and the Archpriest:

Dialogo

Yo halle las argentadas  
yo las mudas y cerillas,  
lucentora, vnturillas,  
y las aguas destiladas;  
yo la liquida estoraque  
y el licor de las rasuras,  
yo tambien como se saque  
la pequilla que no taque  
las lindas actaduras.

Coplas

Perfumes sabe hacer  
De estoraque y menjus;  
Que por diez maravedís  
Dara con que hayais placer.  
Solimán sabe cocer,  
Ambar, algalia, argentadas  
Animes y jubeladas,  
Almizques para oler.

In a recent article Stephen Gilman and Michael J. Ruggiero (Rodrigo de Reinosa and La Celestina, Romanische Forschungen 73, Band 3/4, 1961, pp.255-284) have studied the Coplas de las Comadres in connection





The Archpriest's book also contains an old woman who might be a precursor of Celestina:

Desto son causa unas viejas matronas, malditas de Dios e de sus santos, enemigas de la virgen Santa María...entonce toman ofiçio de alcayuetas fechizeras, e adivinadoras, por fazer perder las otras como ellas...¡Quántas preñadas fazen mouer por la verguença del mundo, asy casadas, biudas, monjas, e aun desposadas!...E, enpero, dime, estas viejas falsas paviotas, ¿quántos matan e enloquecen con sus maldades byenquerençias? ¿Quántas divysiones ponen entre maridos y mugeres...En Barçelona yo conosci una que nunca su casa se vaziaua de los que venían a estas burlerías, vieja de setenta años...

(Arc. Tal., p. 128)

Like Celestina, the Archpriest's old woman is a former prostitute, turned procuress, go-between and witch, plying her trade among widows and virgins, matrons and nuns; her house, like Celestina's famous abode near the tanneries, is always filled with people who require her services.

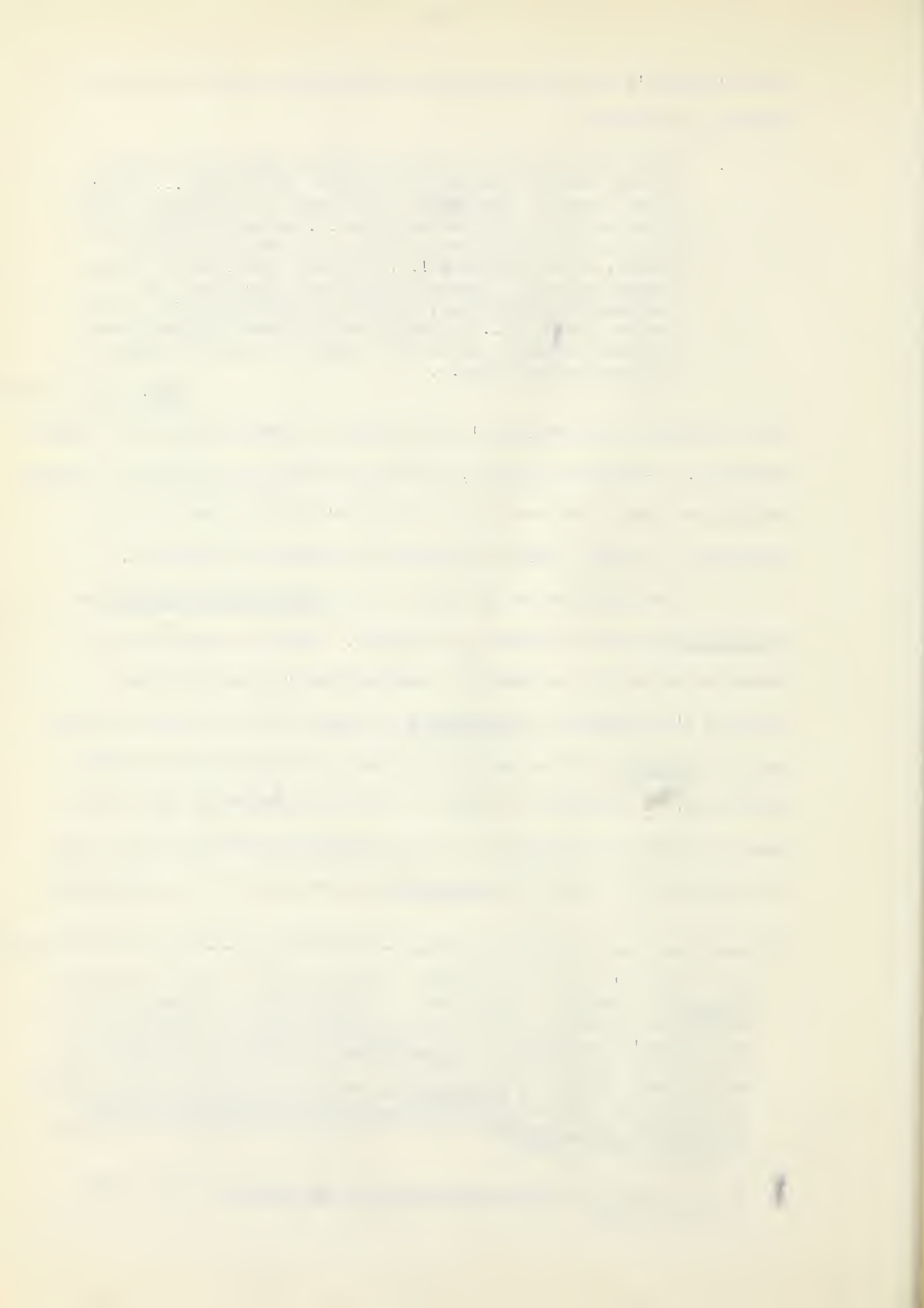
The influence of the style of the Arcipreste de Talauera on La Celestina has been frequently discussed. Nearly a century ago the French hispanist Th. de Puymaigre remarked that "Il semble évident que plus d'un passage de la Celestina eut pour point de départ certaines pages du Corbacho. Cette excellente prose a été préparée par Alfonso Martínez..."<sup>1</sup>. Menéndez y Pelayo felt that the Archpriest had, as he puts it, forged the instrument of Spanish realist prose and that it was the genius of the author of La Celestina to make use of it, creating at

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with Pármeno's speech and believe that the author of Act I used the Coplas as a source. A similarity of word order is the basis of their contention, although this may also indicate either a common source or Reinosa's borrowing from La Celestina (chronology is uncertain). This problem is also being studied by G. D. Trotter, co-editor of the most recent edition of La Celestina, and his conclusions will appear in an article entitled The "Coplas de las Comadres" of Rodrigo de Reinosa and "La Celestina" to be published in Homenaje a D. Alonso, Vol. III, Madrid, 1962.

1. Th. de Puymaigre, La Cour littéraire de Don Juan II, Paris, 1873, Vol. I, p. 166.





the same time the dialogue of the theatre and of the novel<sup>1</sup>. Celestina's description of the delights of friendship in her conversation with Pármeno provides an illustration of the similarity of the styles:

...y especial en recontar las cosas de amores y comunicarlas. Esto hize, estotro me dixo, tal donayre passamos, de tal manera la tome, assi la bese, assi me mordio, assi la abraçe, assi se allego. ¡O que habla, o que gracia, o que juegos, o que besos! Vamos alla, boluamos aca, ande la musica, pintemos los motes, cantemos canciones, inuenciones, justemos.  
(Cel., p.56)

The Archpriest also discusses the way young men brag about their love affairs (although his point of view is naturally different from Celestina's):

Antes se van alabando por plaças e por cantones: "Tú feziste esto, yo fize esto; tú amas tres, yo amo cuatro; tú amas rreynas, yo enperadoras; tú donzellas, yo fijasdalgo...tú vas de noche, e yo de día; tú entras por la puerta, e yo por la ventana...  
(Arc. Tal., p.41)

The Archpriest's style is perhaps more abrupt than the style in the passage from La Celestina and shows less variety, but there is no mistaking the similarity. Calisto's flowery speech, which is very different from Celestina's earthy realism also sounds on occasion like passages from the Archpriest's book:

¡O vejez virtuosa! ¡O virtud enuejecida! ¡O gloriosa esperança de mi desseado fin! ¡O fin de mi deleytosa esperança! ¡O salud de mi passion, reparo de mi tormento, regeneracion mia, viuificacion de mi vida, resurrecion de mi muerte!  
(Cel., p.47)

This resembles the words of a lover, whom the Archpriest has exclaiming:

¡O qué hermosa! ¡O que gentil locana! ¡O que linda galana!  
¡Paresçedes la gloria mundana!  
(Arc. Tal., p.98)

The Arcipreste de Talauera is a didactic prose work and the opportunities for dialogue are naturally limited. However, in some of

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1. Menéndez y Pelayo, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 346.



the anecdotes which the Archpriest recounts, there are examples of dialogue, as in the following scene between a wife and her suspicious husband:

E el otro dize luego: "¿Qué has amiga?"  
Ella responde: "Non nada".  
"Pues dime, señora, ¿por qué lloras?"  
Responde: "Non, por nada".  
"Pues, ¿qué cosa es ésta? ¡Asy gozés de mí!"  
"Vos digo que non nada".

(Arc. Tal., p.146)

The Archpriest's ear for realistic dialogue is just as accurate in this example as the author of the first act of La Celestina. In the scene between Elicia and Sempronio a similar situation is depicted:

Sempronio:...Mas di, ¿que passos suenan arriba?  
Elicia: ¿Quien? Vn mi enamorado.  
Sempronio:Pues creolo.  
Elicia: ¡Alahe, verdad es! Sube alla y verlo has...  
Sempronio:Pues, ¿quien esta arriba?

Both works are filled with popular expressions and proverbs. Since a complete listing of these would be tiresome, only several examples of each will be given.

Popular expressions:

<u>La Celestina</u> :	<u>Mala landre</u> te mate.
<u>Arcipreste de Talauera</u> :	<u>Mala landre</u> , dolor de costado...
<u>La Celestina</u> :	<u>Guay de</u> quien en palacio enuejece.
<u>Arcipreste de Talauera</u> :	<u>Guay de</u> la que tal posee.
<u>La Celestina</u> :	¡ <u>Alahe</u> , verdad es!
<u>Arcipreste de Talauera</u> :	<u>A la he</u> , asý se vos tuerce.

Proverbs:

<u>La Celestina</u> :	Nunca la llaga viene a cicatrizar en la qual muchas melezinas se tientan.
	Es peligro abrir o apremiar las postemas duras porque mas se enconan.
<u>Arcipreste de Talauera</u> :	El ajo e el vino atriaca de villanos.
	Quando la barva de tu vezino vieres pelar, pon la tuya en rremojo.





In short: both in terms of style and in theme there is a strong similarity between the Archpriest's book and the first act of La Celestina. This similarity could be the result of two eventualities:

1. That the author of the first act was influenced by the Arcipreste de Talauera. This has been the traditional view of critics to date.
2. That Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, the Archpriest of Talavera, is himself the author of Act I of La Celestina. This is a possibility that has so far never been suggested. At first sight it does, indeed, seem improbable for one particular reason. The Arcipreste de Talauera was written in 1438; La Celestina was first published in 1499, a difference of sixty-one years. But, as we have seen, the Archpriest was still alive in 1466, and it is not impossible from linguistic evidence that the first act was written three decades before the publication of La Celestina. Therefore it is conceivable, at least, that the Archpriest could have composed the first act. However, there are other objections.

The first is that the rest of La Celestina shows the influence of the Arcipreste de Talauera as well as Act I. In Act IX Elicia and Areusa's jealous tirades against Melibea seem to be based in part on the fourth chapter of the second part of the Archpriest's book, De como la muger es murmurante e detractadora. The scene is Celestina's dinner party and Sempronio, who, it will be recalled, is Elicia's lover, praises Melibea. Elicia together with Areusa fiercely criticize Melibea's appearance in tones strongly reminiscent of the Archpriest:

Elicia: ¿Gentil es Melibea? Entonces lo es, entonces acertaran, quando andan a pares los diez mandamientos. Aquella hermosura por vna moneda se compra de la tienda...

Areusa: Todo el año se esta encerrada con mudas de mill suziedades. Por vna vez que aya de salir donde pueda ser vista, enuiste su cara con hiel e miel, con unas y con otras cosas, que por reuerencia de la mesa dexo de dezir. Las riquezas las hazen a estas hemosas y ser alabadas, que no las gracias de su cuerpo...

(Cel., p.168)



The same idea is expressed by the Archpriest's envious woman:

Mudas para la cara diez vezes se las pone, una tras otra, al día una vegada...otras mill mudas fazen por nueve días... con esto es ella tanto mirada; pues nin grado nin gracias, synón a los altares quien salió tal fermosura.

(Arc. Tal., p.94)

Like Elicia she maintains that the beauty of a simple girl who cannot afford to buy cosmetics is far greater than that of the great lady who spends all her days painting her face.

Melibea's resistance to Calisto's advances in Act XIV has a resemblance in terms of feminine psychology, if not in language, to a similar scene in the Arcipreste de Talauera. Melibea cries out to Calisto:

Guarte, señor, de dañar lo que con todos los tesoros del mundo non se restaura...Por mi vida, que avnque hable tu lengua quanto quisiera, no obren las manos quanto pueden. Esta quedo, señor mio.

(Cel., pp.237-238)

The Archpriest's woman is more vulgar in her resistance:

¡Yuy! ¡Dexadme! ¡Non quiero! ¡Yuy! ¡Que porfiado! ¡En buena fe yo me vaya! ¡Por Dios, pues, yo de bozes! ¡Estad en ora buena! ¡Dexadme agora estar! ¡Estad un poco quedo!

(Arc. Tal., p.130)

Both women, of course, are not entirely sincere in their efforts to protect their virtue.

Aside from these specific influences, there is a general similarity in language, use of proverbs and popular expressions, although not nearly as pronounced as in the case of the first act.

The point is, however, that since the case for identifying the author of Act I as Alfonso Martinez is based partly on the similarity of style, it is weakened if there is also a similarity of style between the Archpriest's book and the rest of La Celestina. It might easily be argued that there is no more reason to believe that the Archpriest wrote



the first act than the rest of the play. In answer to this objection there are two arguments. First of all, the similarity of style of Acts II-XXI of La Celestina to the Arcipreste de Talauera is not as striking as in the case of the first act. Secondly, since in spite of the very considerable evidence for the existence of two authors no one can deny the general unity of style in La Celestina, a common model would almost be a necessity. Rojas must have been familiar with the Arcipreste de Talauera in order to have been so successful in continuing the first act, and, of course, if the author of this act was actually the Archpriest, the unity of style would be particularly understandable.

The second objection is that the style of Act I is more advanced than the style of the Arcipreste de Talauera. The author of Act I wrote in a more polished manner; his style is better organized, more subtle, more varied, less given to frenzied outbursts of language as we saw in the case of the envious woman. Furthermore, the Archpriest, as we know him from his theoretical treatise, showed little evidence of familiarity with the language of courtly love which Calisto uses so much in the first act.

This objection, however, does not take into account the time elapsed between the composition of the Arcipreste de Talauera and the estimated date of composition of the first act, a matter of some thirty years. Could not the Archpriest's style have matured during this period? As for the language of courtly love, it was not especially in fashion in 1438 but definitely had become so by the middle of the century. Alfonso Martínez, who was not only a priest but a man of letters, the author of a Spanish chronicle, lives of saints, and, of course, the treatise against love, would surely have been exposed to





the poetry and sentimental novels which were so much in vogue and from which he could have imitated the language of courtly love. Even if this were not the case there is still the strong possibility that the Archpriest was familiar with courtly love through the first two books of Andreas Capellanus' De Amore. There is no evidence that he did know them, but since he knew the even less widespread third book, it would not be unlikely at all. And in fact some of the speeches which the French chaplain gives as models for the courtly lover are not unlike Calisto's speech, as in the following example:

Maiores mihi restant Deo gratiae referendae quam cuiquam in orbe vivente, quia, hoc, quod meus animus videre super omnia cupiebat, nunc corporali mihi visu concessum aspicere, et hoc mihi Deum credo praemium nimium desiderii mei affectum, et quia nei voluit exaudire preces importune precantis. Non enim poterat diei vel noctis hora pertransire continua qua Deum non exorarem attentius, ut corporaliter vos ex propinquo videndi mihi concederet largitatem.<sup>1</sup>

In his long speech in the first scene of Act I, Calisto also thanks God for having made possible the sight of his beloved, and he also attributes the granting of the reward to the long hours of prayer and supplication:

En esto veo, Melibea, la grandeza de Dios...En dar poder a natura que de tan perfecta fermosura te dotasse, y fazer a mi inmerito tanta merced que verte alcançasse y en tan conueniente lugar que mi secreto dolor manifestarte pudiesse. Sin dubda incomparablemente es mayor tal galardon que el seruicio, sacrificio, deuocion y obras pias que por este lugar alcançar yo tengo a Dios offrecido.

(Cel., p.23)

Therefore the possibility that the Archpriest of Talavera wrote the first act of La Celestina cannot easily be denied.

Is there a better hypothesis? As we have seen in the first chapter, Rojas, or the editor, suggested that the author was either Juan de Mena or Rodrigo Cota. Juan de Mena, although he was a good poet, was

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1. Andreas Capellanus, De Amore, Salvatore Battaglia ed., Roma, 1947, p.146.



an abominable prose writer, and no one seriously believes that he could have been responsible for the first act of La Celestina. Rodrigo Cota is a more likely candidate. He, like Rojas, was a converso from Toledo, and in the Diálogo entre el Amor y un Viejo he wrote a passage similar in many ways to Pármeno's description of Celestina's laboratory. The main trouble with the theory that Cota was the author is that we know so little about him. He has left no prose writings at all and aside from the Diálogo very little poetry. Would he have been capable of a work having the power and maturity of the first act? It is difficult to say. The evidence of the Diálogo is really too insubstantial to make a rational judgement one way or another.

Other writers in the second half of the fifteenth century do not seem to be good possibilities either. Authors of the sentimental novel, such as Diego de San Pedro and Juan Rodríguez del Padrón can be dismissed immediately. Their artificial and precious style, containing none of the elements of realistic speech, and their concept of courtly love are totally different from the style and concepts of La Celestina. The poets, Gómez Manrique, Jorge Manrique, the Marqués de Santillana, Juan del Encina, are equally foreign to the realistic, almost coarse spirit of La Celestina. And finally, the prose writers, such as Luis de Lucena or Alfonso Tostado del Madrigal, generally are characterized by uninspired, pedantic styles.

We may then say that the hypothesis that Alfonso Martínez de Toledo was the author of Act I of La Celestina cannot be rejected on the basis that an equally good or better case can be made for another writer.

On the other hand certain points can be made which strengthen the theory that the Archpriest of Talavera wrote Act I.





### A. Sources

First of all, the sources of Act I are authors of the first half of the fifteenth century or earlier. Whereas the rest of La Celestina has reminiscences or borrowings from a variety of poets and prosists of the latter part of the fifteenth century, such as Cota, Manrique, Costana, Quiñones, Nicolás Nuñez, the first act does not show the influence of these authors<sup>1</sup>. Instead the author of Act I leaned heavily on the classics - Terence, Aristotle, Seneca; on the church fathers - Crisólogo and Origen; on fourteenth century Spanish works, especially the Libro de Buen Amor by Juan Ruiz, and on a few, a very few, authors of the first half of the fifteenth century - one reference to Juan de Mena and one to Alfonso Madrigal del Tostado. The use of the Libro de Buen Amor bears many striking resemblances to Celestina, as has been carefully established by Bonilla y San Martín<sup>2</sup>, and it may be considered the primary source. Now, the Archpriest of Talavera knew the Libro de Buen Amor well, referring to Juan Ruiz by name, mentioning the trotaconventos, and having a general relationship in terms of language and an atmosphere of realism. Thus the sources of the first act are very much the kind of sources which the Archpriest of Talavera would have used, and in many cases did use.

### B. Religion

Act I of La Celestina reveals a religious, or perhaps one should say clerical, mode of thinking. Calisto speaks of "servicio, sacrificio, deuocion, y obras pias" and of the "gloriosos santos que se deleytan en la vision diuina". He is concerned about the fires of purgatory, the

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1. Castro Guisasola, op. cit., p. 188.

2. A. Bonilla y San Martín, Antecedentes del Tipo Celestinesco en la Literatura Latina, Revue Hispanique, 1906, Vol. XV, pp. 372-386.



state of his soul, and prays piously "O todopoderoso Dios". Sempronio is particularly orthodox in his views - ironically, in view of his own moral laxity. He calls his master a heretic and what he says "contradize la Cristiana religion". He reverently comments on the mysterious ways of God:

¡O soberano Dios, quan altos son tus mysterios...Mandaste al hombre por la muger dejar el padre y la madre; agora no solo aquello, mas a ti y a tu ley desamparan.

(Cel., p.28)

His philosophy, as is the case with all clerics in the later middle ages, is firmly grounded in Aristotle. When Calisto asks Sempronio to listen to the description of Melibea, the servant refers to it as a "sermon". He speaks of "gentiles, judios, cristianos e moros": the inclusion of "gentiles" is more likely to be made by a clerical than a secular author, since it refers here to philosophers, hardly looked upon as gentiles by any but the clergy. Sempronio quotes the church fathers:

Por ellas es dicho: arma del diablo, cabeça de pecado, destruyicion de parayso.

(Origen)

No has rezado en la festiuidad de Sant Juan, do dize:  
Las mugeres...

(Crisologo)

The author of the first act therefore shows a strong familiarity with religious learning, and a predilection to make use of it. Since at the same time he is obviously not particularly devout, the impression is that of a somewhat worldly priest. The Archpriest of Talavera would naturally fit this description.

#### C. Old age

If the hypothesis that the Archpriest of Talavera wrote the first act of La Celestina before or in 1470 is correct, he would have been approximately seventy at the time, just before his death. (His death, by the way, would account for the fact that the first act was



unfinished). Now, there are indications that the first act was written by a man of advanced years.

The strongest of these indications is in the character of Celestina herself. She is a completely believable portrayal of an old woman. Her first words to Sempronio establish to perfection both her character and her age:

¡Hijo mio! ¡Rey mio! Turbado me has. No te puedo hablar.  
Torna y dame otro abraço. ¿Y tres dias podiste estar sin  
vernos?

(Cel., p.36).

Here she flatters Sempronio, calls him her king, pretends to be vastly surprised (she had spotted Sempronio coming to her house long before) but at the same time the age differential is clear as she calls him "my son", and begs him for another embrace in the manner of an ancient benevolent aunt. Her easy dominance of Sempronio seems to come from years of experience with people: she knows exactly how to treat them and what to say to them. As Sempronio and Celestina walk out the door together, the old woman, now being rid of the flighty young Elicia who had briefly impeded her cosy relationship with Sempronio, quickly reestablishes it:

Parta Dios, hijo, de lo suyo contigo que no sin causa lo  
hara, siquiera porque has piedad desta pecadora de vieja.

(Cel., p.39)

Not until her scene with Pármeno, however, does the perfection of the author's psychology of old age become fully apparent. Pármeno had made every effort to prevent his master from falling in the clutches of the old bawd, and Celestina had overheard these efforts.

Bien te oy; y no pienses que el oyr con los otros exteriores  
seses mi vejez aya perdido.

(Cel., p.48)

"I heard you and don't think my old age has cost me my hearing as it





has my other senses". This detail, appropriate as it is, is not necessary to the dialogue and is the kind of thing an older man, very conscious of his own failing senses, would have found natural to include. Celestina's old age is constantly referred to in the scene, either directly or by implication. In her efforts to persuade Pármeno to betray his master she emphasizes her age and experience:

Llegate aca, putico, que no sabes nada del mundo ni de sus deleytes. Mas rauia mala me mate, si te llego a mi, avnque vieja!

(Cel., p.49)

Pármeno on his part does not forget to call attention to her old age.

"Flaca puta vieja" and "porque olias a vieja me fuya de ti" are some of the rejoinders he makes.

But it is Celestina who is the most conscious of her old age:

Por tanto mi hijo, dexa los impetus de la juventud. Y tornate con la doctrina de tus mayores a la razon.

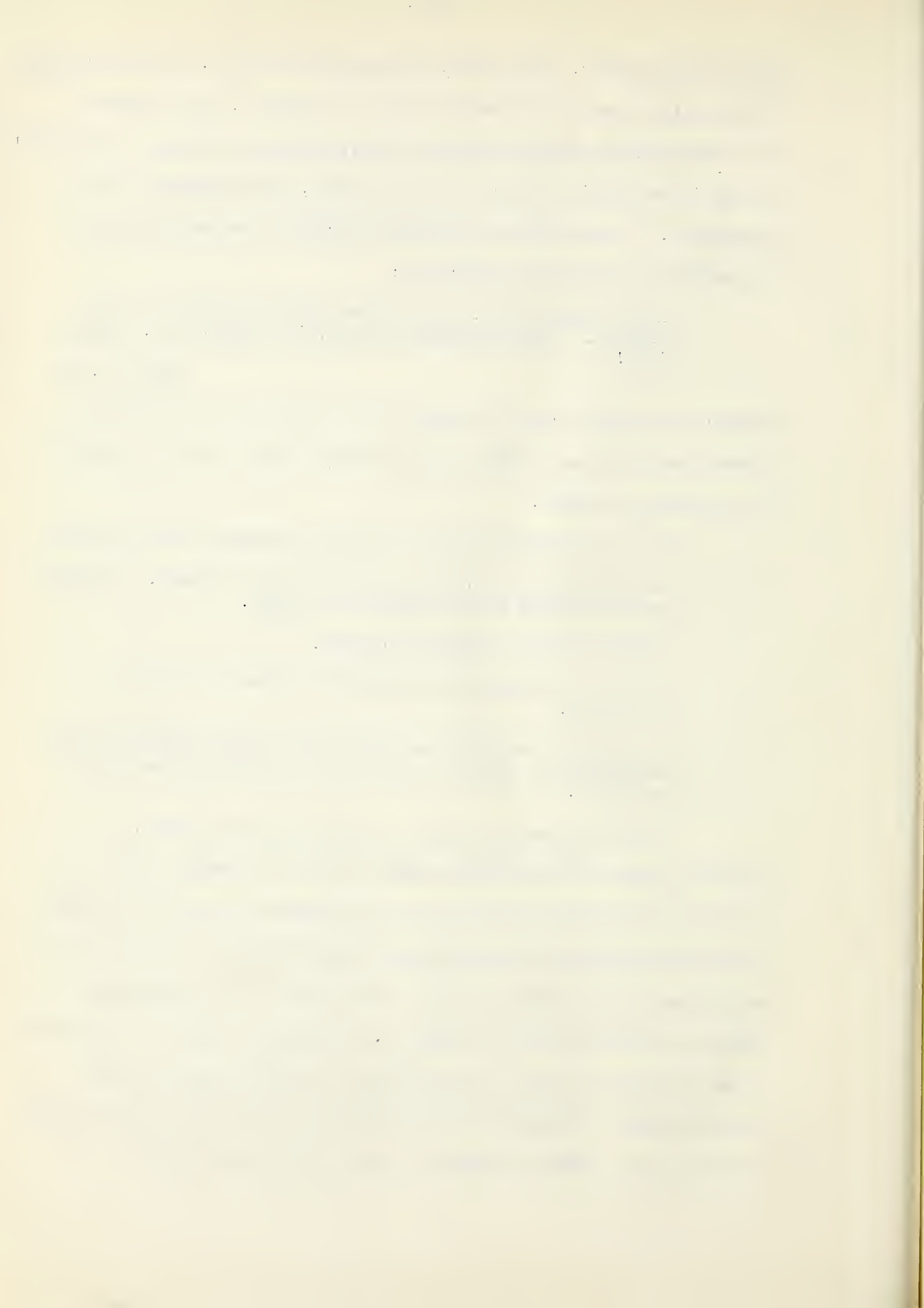
¡Guay de quien en palacio enuejece!

O hijo bien dizen que la prudencia no puede ser sino en los viejos.

Por deleyte, semejable es, como seays en edad dispuestos para todo linaje de plazer, en que mas los moços que los viejos se juntan.

Y la experiencia no puede ser mas que en los viejos.

Celestina reveals her whole philosophy of life to Pármeno, and it is, of course, an ill one by strictly moral standards as she places supreme importance on money and sensual pleasure and maintains that they are to be obtained by good means or foul. Yet in spite of her materialism there is a certain charm and wisdom in her words, a wisdom of experience, of one who has lived much and seen much. She feels strongly about having friends. Friendship is the only thing that lasts, the only thing that can help in bad times and allow you to enjoy good times:



Pues loado Dios bienes tienes. ¿Y no sabes que has menester amigos para los conseruar?...Y por tanto en los infortunios el remedio es a los amigos.

Y para esto, Parmeno, ¿ay deleyte sin compania?

This attitude towards friendship rings very true in an old woman afraid above all of loneliness - the dread prospect of old age without family and without friends. She recognizes the importance of luck or fortune, of the folly of relying too much on one's own ability, on the necessity for prudence and being open to good counsel. She abhors priggishness and deadening morality. All these are convincing touches in the portrait of the old woman, and seem to come from a deep inner knowledge of the problems of old age.

Furthermore, the author seems to have been quite out of sympathy with the points of view of youth. The young men of the act are inferior characterizations. Sempronio and Pármeno are artificial and pedantic; Calisto is ridiculous. All three are essentially unreal. This is particularly true of Pármeno, and his artificiality is striking in comparison with Celestina in their scene together. Pármeno speaks almost entirely in platitudes:

Pues yo con ellos no biueria contento, y tengo por honesta cosa la pobreza alegre. Y avn mas te digo: que no los que poco tienen son pobres, mas los que mucho dessean...

(Cel., p.54)

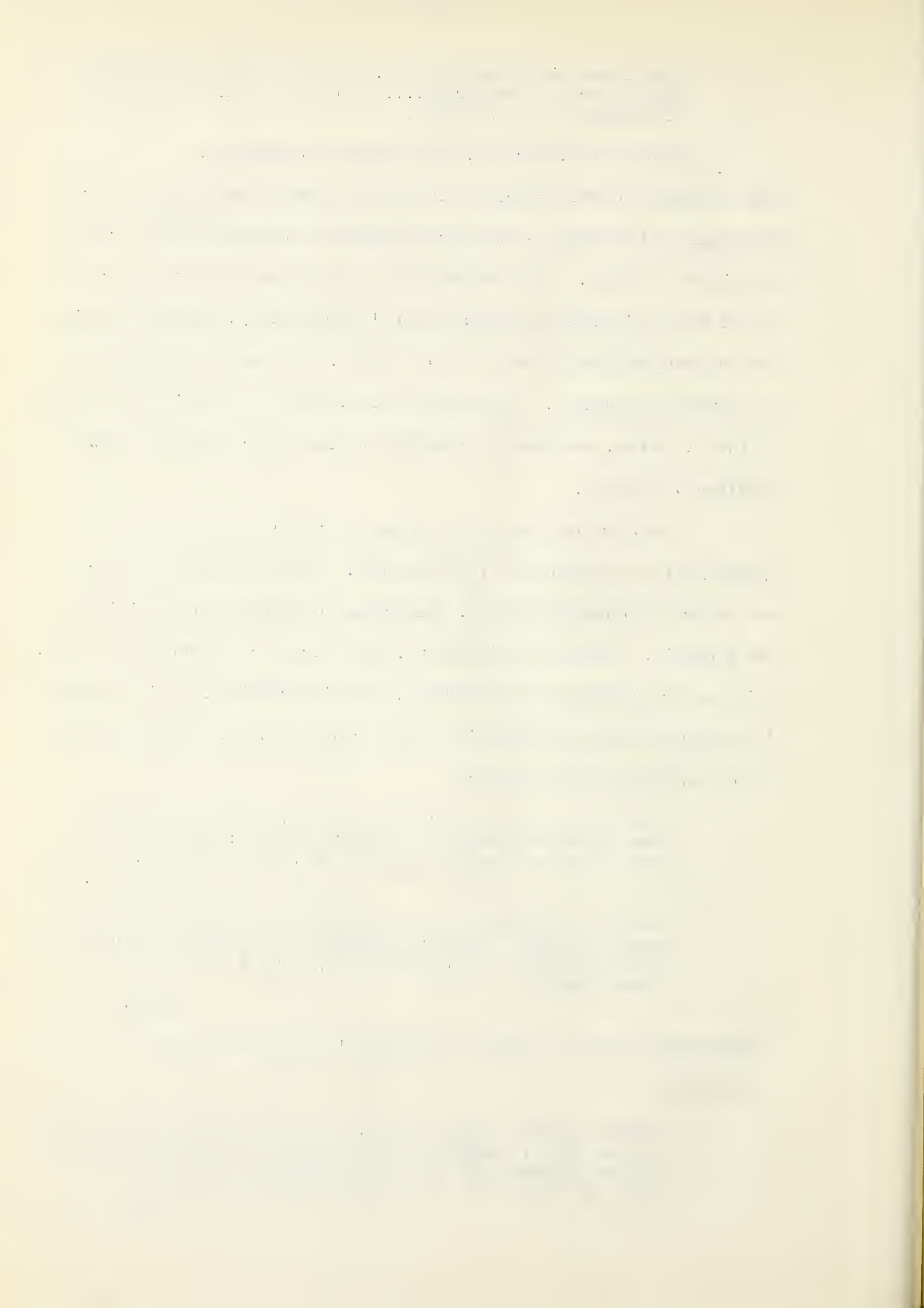
Oydo he a mis mayores que un enxemplo de luxuria o auaricia mucho mal haze; y que con aquellos deue hombre conuersar, que le hagan mejor; y aquellos dexar, a quien el mejores piensa hazer.

(Cel., p.56)

When Pármeno begins to yield to Celestina's persuasive power, he is just as pedantic:

Celestina, todo tremo en oyte. No se que haga, perplexo estoy. Por una parte, tengote por madre, por otra, a Calisto por amo. Riqueza desseo; pero quien torpemente sube a lo alto, mas ayna caye que subio. No querria bienes mal ganados.

(Cel., p.58)





Pármeno's trembling lacks conviction.

The evidence in support of the hypothesis that the Archpriest of Talavera wrote the first act of La Celestina can be summarized as follows:

1. Although the style of the Arcipreste de Talauera is considerably more primitive than the style of Act I of La Celestina, no author writing in the second half of the fifteenth century seems to have had a style as close to that of the first act as the Archpriest. The more developed style of the first act can be accounted for by the approximately thirty years which elapsed between the composition of the Archpriest's book in 1438 to the year of his death in 1470(?) when, according to our theory, the first act would have been composed.
2. The fact that the work is unfinished can be explained by the Archpriest's death.
3. The theme of the first act is the same as the theme of the Arcipreste de Talavera: the condemnation of passionate love and of women<sup>1</sup>.
4. The sources of the first act do not include authors of the latter part of the fifteenth century. They do include authors familiar, or of the type that would be familiar, to the Archpriest.
5. In the vital question of the character of Celestina, the Archpriest was thoroughly familiar with the Libro de Buen Amor which is the primary source for the type of the go-between. In addition the Arcipreste de Talauera contains a brief portrait of a Celestinesque type.

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1. It is interesting, in this connection, that the subtitle of La Celestina says that the play was written "en reprehension de los locos enamorados, que, vencidos en su desordenado apetito, a sus amigas llaman y dicen ser Dios", which is very much the language and theme of the Archpriest. Whether the author of Act I was responsible for the subtitle it is impossible to say. However, we know from the Prologue that he had given the play the title of Comedia de Calisto y Melibea, and it is quite possible that he also wrote the subtitle.



6. The Archpriest knew Boccaccio's De Casibus which is referred to in Act I and which may even have suggested the plot of La Celestina, which is the fall of a nobleman (both literally and metaphorically) as a result of love.

7. There is considerable evidence in the first act that the author was accustomed to religious forms of expression which indicates that he was of the clergy.

8. The first act appears to have been written by someone with a profound understanding of old age, and conversely an antipathy to youth. This suggests an author of advanced years.

The theory that the author of the first act of La Celestina is the Archpriest of Talavera is naturally only tentative. The evidence and arguments which we have proposed are the result of a preliminary investigation only. Much research remains to be done, particularly on style. Is it possible, for example, to date the style of the first act more accurately? If it could be shown that it was written as early as 1470 the theory of the Archpriest's authorship would be considerably strengthened. A really detailed comparison of the style of Act I and of the Arcipreste de Talauera would also be important. The general similarity of the two styles has often been pointed out, but can a more intimate relationship, such as would result from the maturing of one man's style over a long period of time, be shown? Or, conversely, such an investigation may prove that the styles are essentially too dissimilar to be of the same author, regardless of the time elapsed.

However, as far as we have been able to determine, this has been the only attempt made so far to establish the identity of the author of Act I of La Celestina, and the theory can be regarded as a working hypothesis, either to be strengthened or rejected on the basis



of further evidence. The question cannot, of course, be completely resolved without the discovery of documentary proof, but as the fifteenth century in Spanish literature has been relatively neglected by scholars, perhaps some day such proof will come to light.



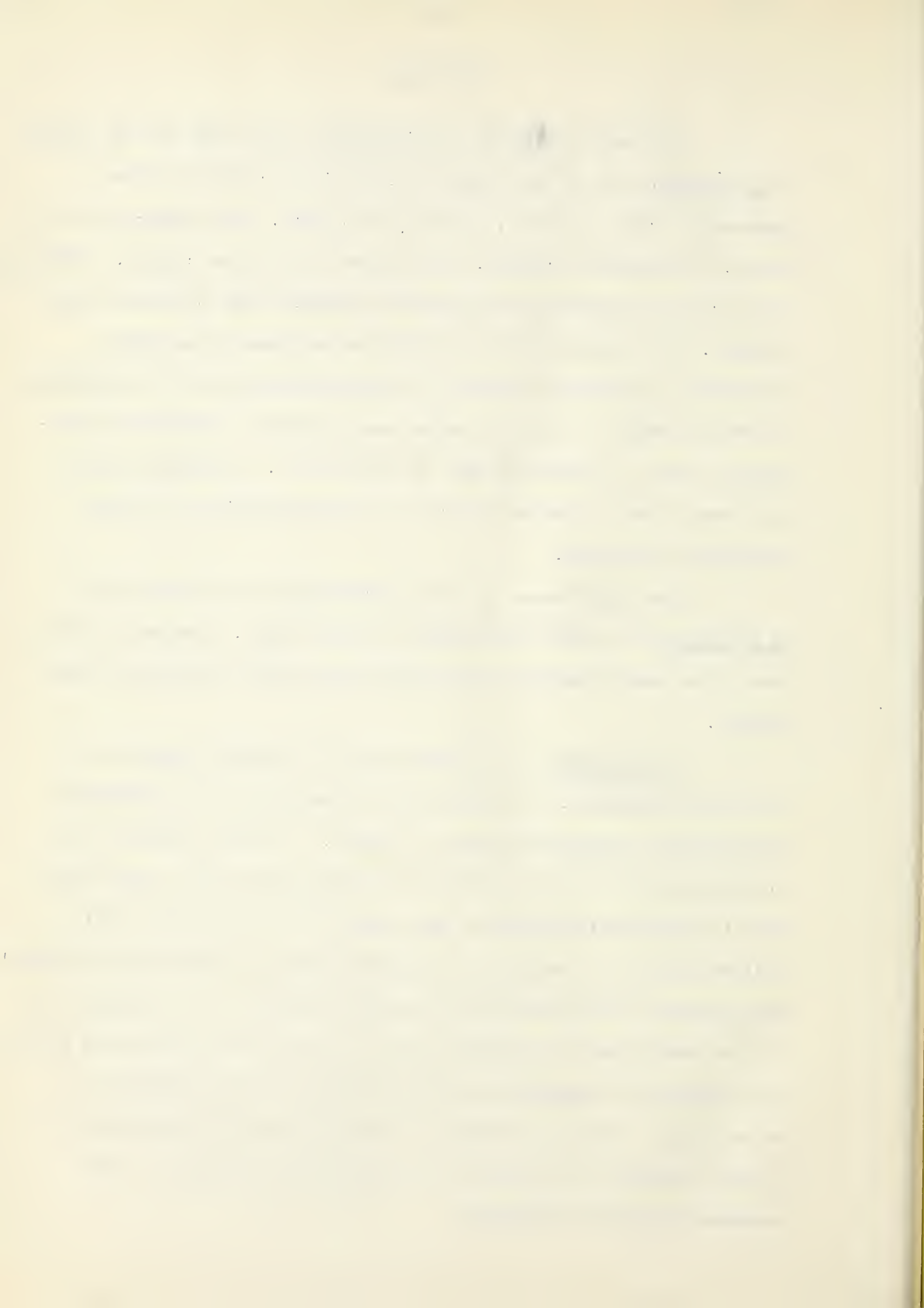


## CONCLUSION

The basic assumption of this essay is that there are two authors of La Celestina, one of whom wrote the long first act and the other, presumably Fernando de Rojas, the rest of the play. The evidence for this theory, now generally accepted, was reviewed in the first chapter. Following this, Act I was analysed and interpreted primarily from the point of view of theme. The characterization of Celestina was shown to be almost accidental, the original purpose of the author being rather the reprobation of love and women; in this the author was following a tradition of anti-feminism, and, in a satirical way, of courtly love. Finally the theory was proposed that the author of Act I was Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, Archpriest of Talavera.

The significance of this interpretation of the first act on La Celestina as a whole would require a further essay. However, we shall make a few general remarks in these final pages which may suggest future studies.

La Celestina is a difficult play to interpret because it is so often inconsistent. Its very title is inconsistent, or paradoxical: Tragicomedia, a comedy which ends in tragedy. Its hero, Calisto, is an outwardly comic, or at least unheroic, character who plays a tragic role. The plot lacks real motivation: why, many critics have asked, didn't Calisto, since he is obviously a respectable suitor, simply ask for Melibea's hand instead of going through the notorious Celestina. The language is on the one hand didactic, artificial, and on the other hand popular and realistic. The servants are supposedly low class but talk with the erudition of educated men. Even the portrayal of Celestina has been criticized: her solemn invocation to the devil in the third act has appeared to some scholars to be out of character.



These inconsistencies have given rise to a variety of interpretations and explanations. Some critics, such as Azorín<sup>1</sup>, have attributed the seeming imperfections in La Celestina to the technical fallibility of Fernando de Rojas. After all, he was an innovator, writing in a unique genre, and at a time when literature was influenced by the contradictory currents of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It would therefore not be surprising that Rojas' technical skill was uncertain. Others, such as Rachel Frank<sup>2</sup>, have found an explanation in the influence of contemporary literary forms, particularly the sentimental novel (this would explain, for example, the illicit nature of the love story). Américo Castro<sup>3</sup> regards La Celestina as reflecting two worlds, the lower classes and the aristocracy, isolated from each other and contradictory. Valbuena Prat<sup>4</sup> also sees a dual world, but he ascribes it to the confluence of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance rather than to the juxtaposition of social classes.

It is not our intention here to examine the validity of these various interpretations, but to suggest that the contradictory nature of La Celestina, which has been so universally noted, may be at least partially explained by our approach to the first act.

If the first act is compared to the rest of La Celestina it is evident that the inherent nature of the two parts is different. The first act, as far as it goes, is basically a didactic work; it is a comedy with a moral purpose, a satire on courtly love, an anti-feminist tract. The rest of the play, however, becomes a profoundly pessimistic vision of life, summed up by Pleberio's anguished soliloquy in the last act which ends with the words " Por que me dexaste triste y solo in hac lachrimarum valle?".

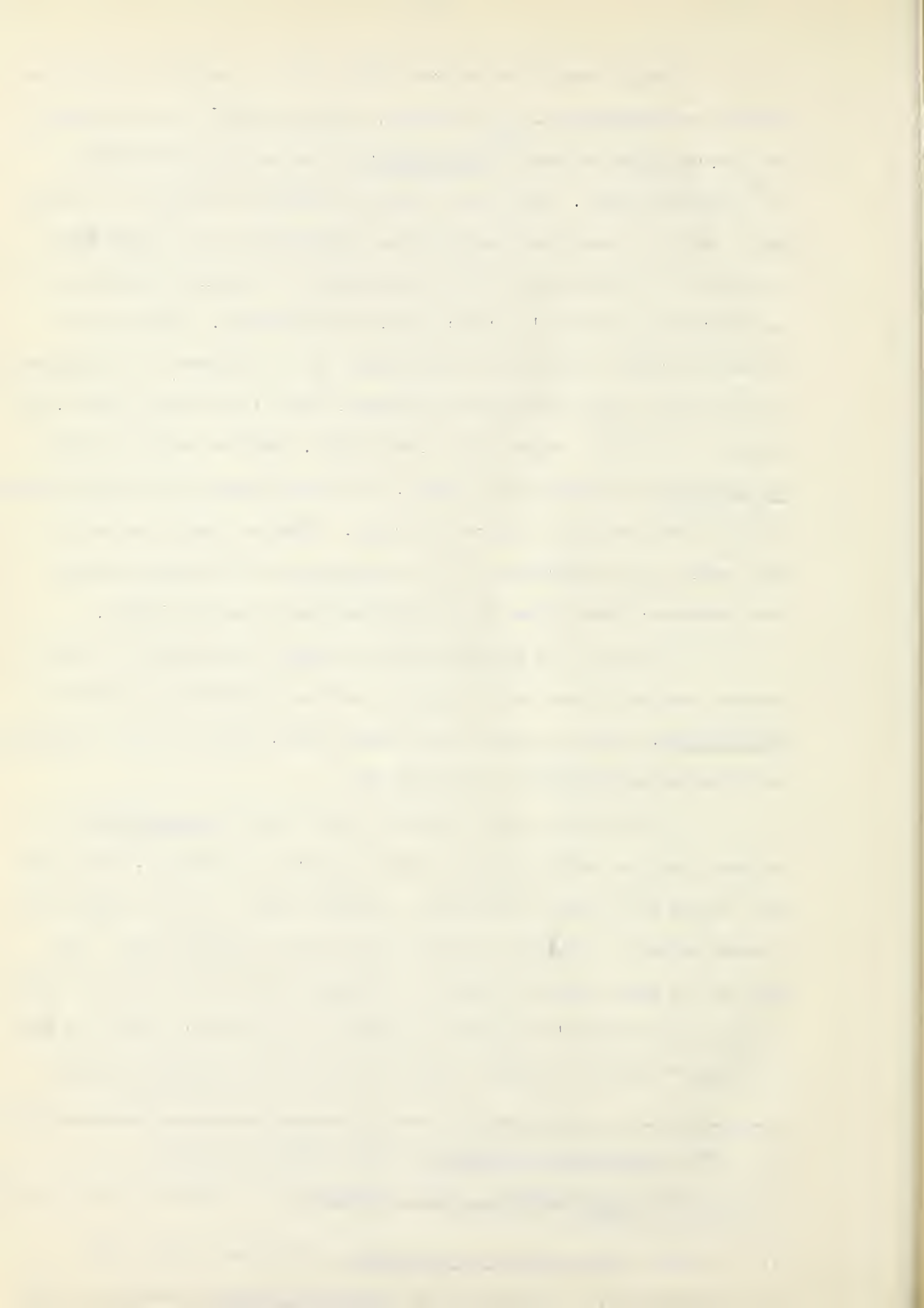
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1. Azorín, Los Valores Literarios, Madrid, 1921, pp. 103 ff.

2. R. Frank, Four Paradoxes in "The Celestina", The Romanic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, 1947, pp. 53-68.

3. A. Castro, Santa Teresa y Otros Ensayos, Santander, 1929, p.205.

4. A. Valbuena Prat, Historia de la Literatura Española, Barcelona, 1937, I, p. 352





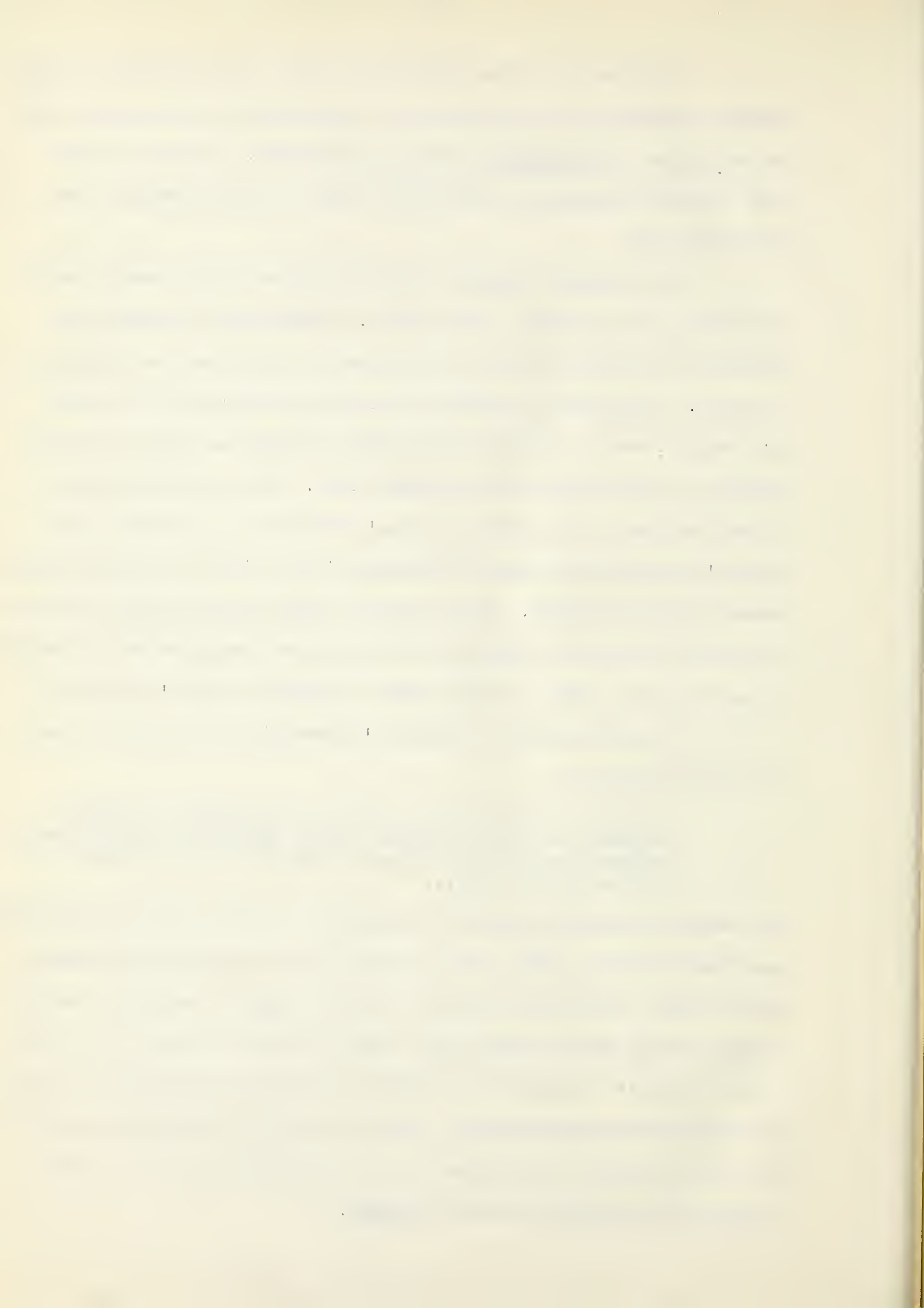
If Rojas did in fact inherit the first act and was faced with the problem of grafting his tragic art on to a comedy with a moral purpose, the contradictions in La Celestina would seem inevitable. How could the two very different approaches be synthesized without creating paradoxes and inconsistencies?

The curiously disparate characterizations of the lovers, Calisto and Melibea, is an example of this effect. Melibea has the dignity and profundity of a tragic heroine, her apotheosis in death has the grandeur of an Iseult. But Melibea is robbed of true tragic proportions by the fact that Calisto, who is a foolish young gallant, cheated and ridiculed by his servants, is not worthy of her passionate love. This incongruity is not, in our view, due to the failure of Rojas' artistry but to the fact that Calisto's character was already established in the first act whereas Melibea appears only very briefly. Rojas could not change Calisto without affecting the unity of the play; Melibea, on the other hand, having no real personality in the first act, could be freely created according to Rojas' tragic art.

A second paradox is Celestina's invocation of the devil at the end of the third act:

Conjurete, triste Pluton, señor de la profundidad infernal,  
emperador de la corte danada, capitan soberuio de los condenados  
angeles, senor de los sulfureos fuegos que los hervientes  
ethnicos montes manan...

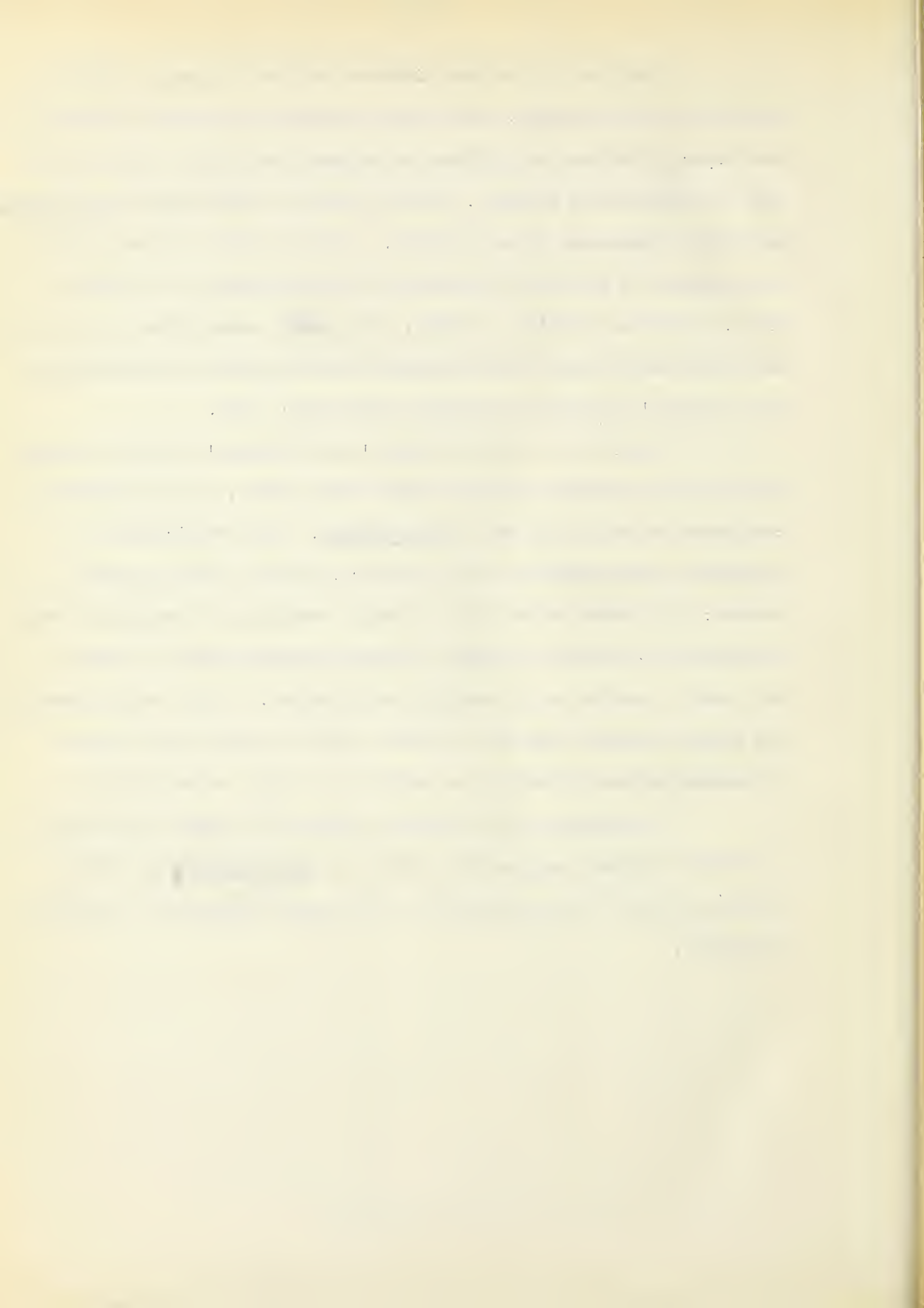
This ominous incantation, spoken in exaggerated language foreign to Celestina's usual earthy realism, seems out of proportion with the relatively mundane task at hand: why invoke the aid of the devil simply to arrange a meeting between a young man and young lady? Again this does not seem to be so much a flaw in Rojas' technique as his effort to transform the fragment of comedy into a work of tragic dimensions. Seen in this light Celestina's invocation has an artistically valid purpose: it is a foreshadowing of the tragedy to come, like the witches scene in Macbeth.



Then there is the much discussed and much disparaged lack of motivation for the tragedy. For there is indeed no discernible obstacle to the romance of Calisto and Melibea, no Montague and Capulet feud, no King Mark to prevent their marriage. This is surely a serious flaw in La Celestina, but it is a flaw which Rojas inherited. The first author did not create a real obstacle to the love of Calisto and Melibea because, in the first place, he did not envision a tragedy, and, in the second place, the tradition of courtly love, which he was satirizing did not require an obstacle other than the Lady's initial and entirely conventional scorn.

Finally there is the servants' and Celestina's erudite language which is not consistent with their lower class status, and has often been considered an artistic defect in La Celestina. This artificiality of language is very prominent in the first act, and has a valid literary purpose: the author was writing a didactic work and not a realistic drama; he needed the servants to express his moral philosophy and to instruct the reader: realism was a secondary consideration. Rojas, having inherited the erudite servants from the first act, could not change their manner of speaking without affecting the continuity of their characterization.

In conclusion, the first act, viewed as a separate entity with a different literary purpose than the rest of La Celestina, may well be the key to many of the complexities of this unique masterpiece of Spanish literature.



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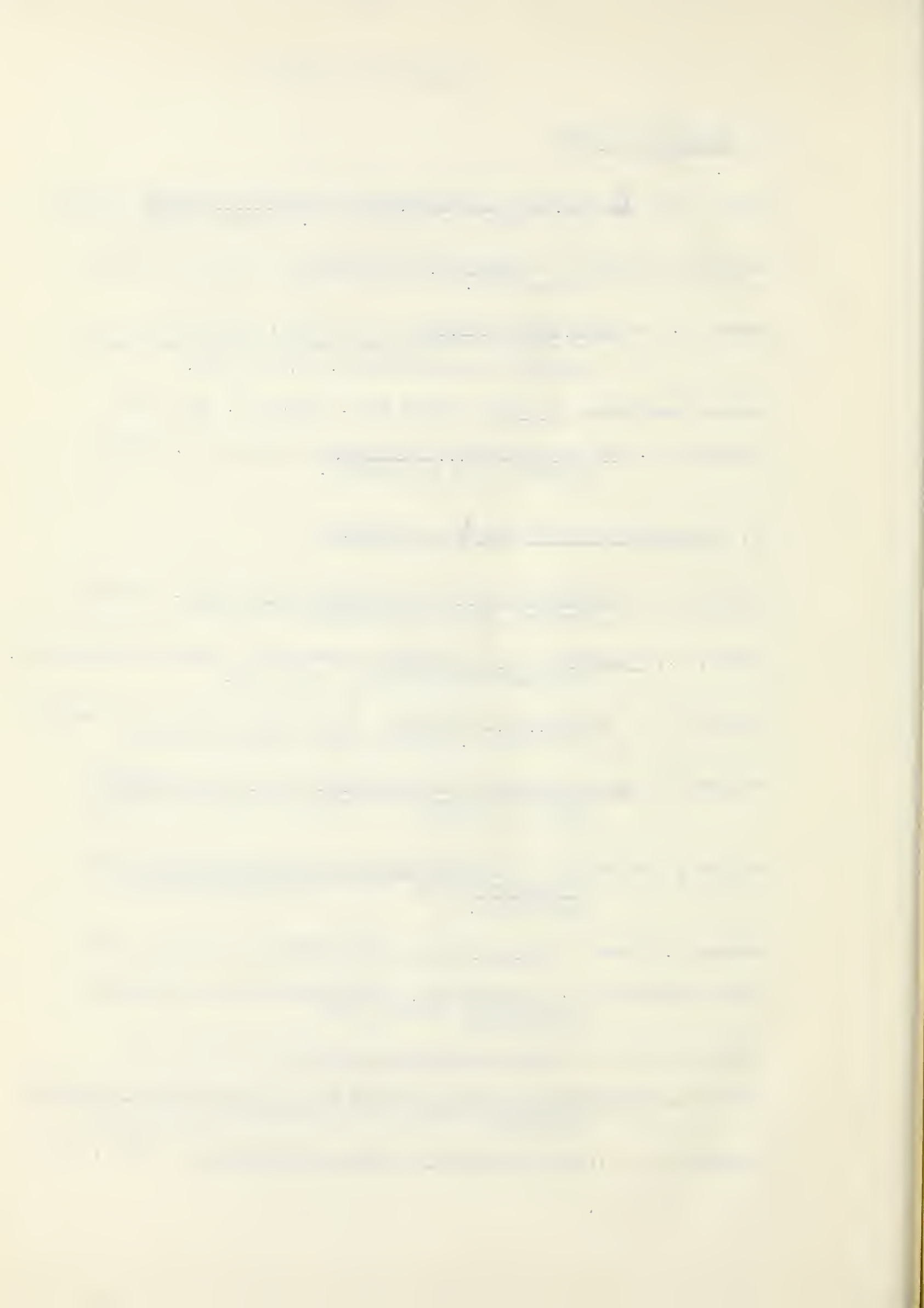
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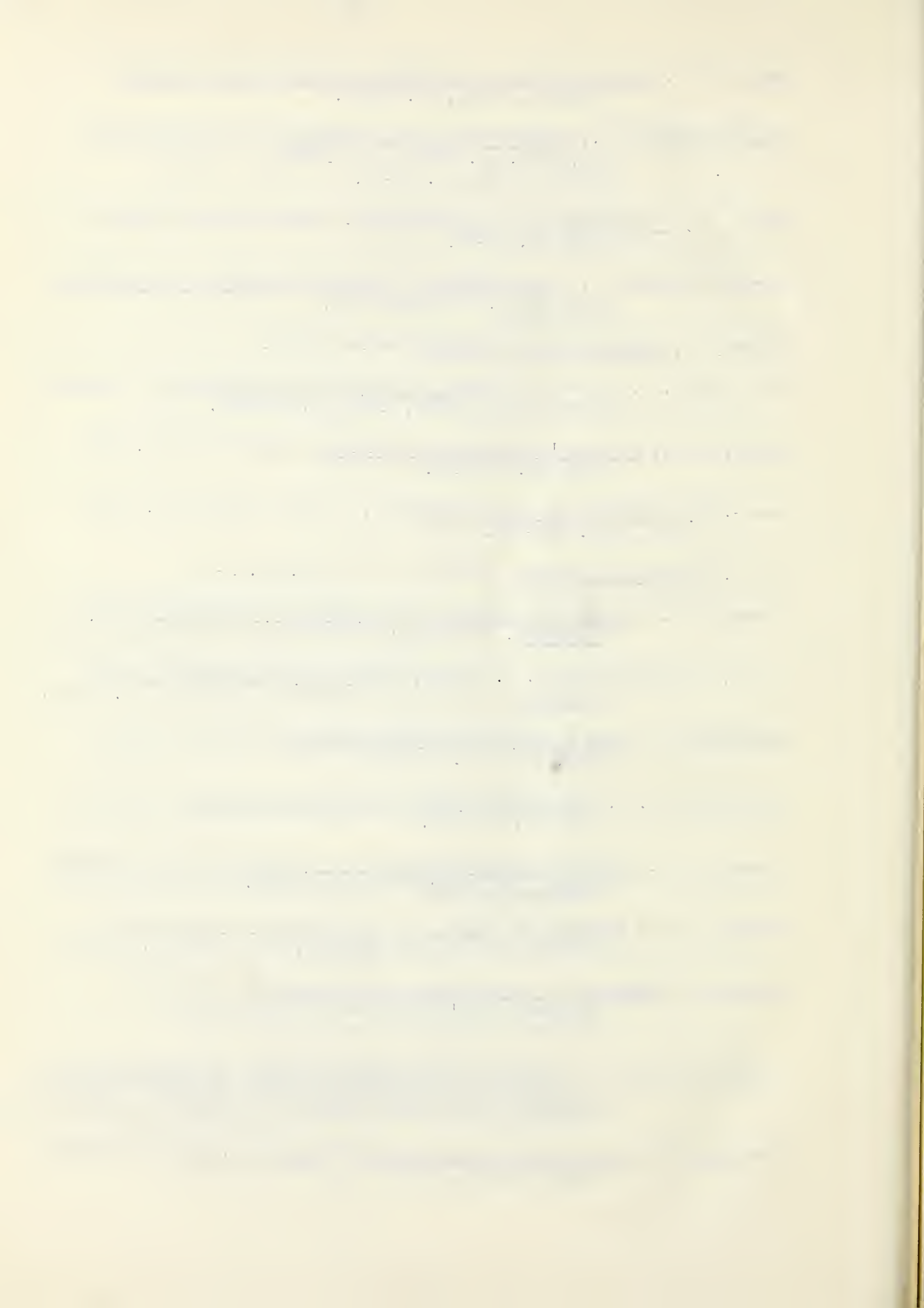
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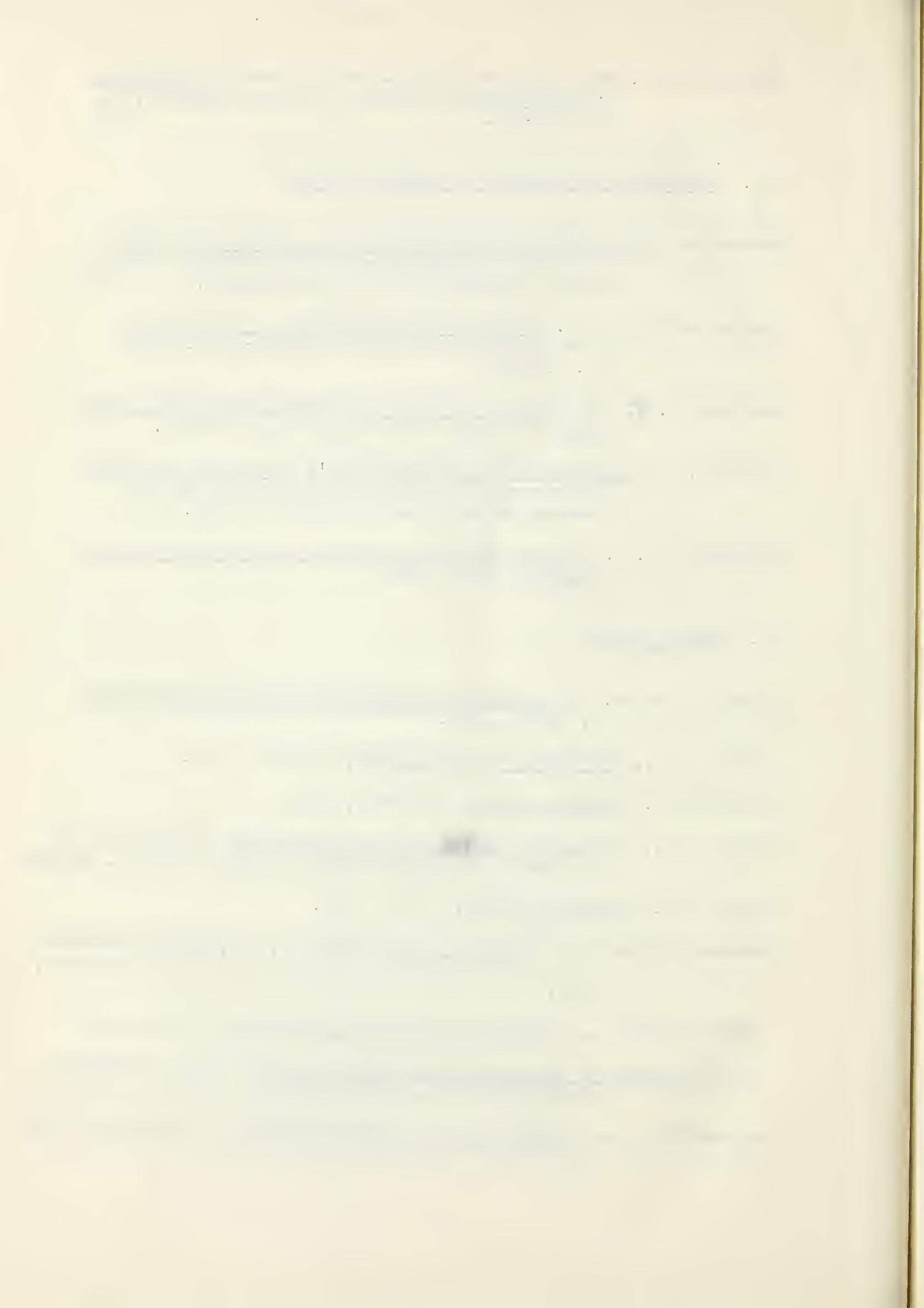
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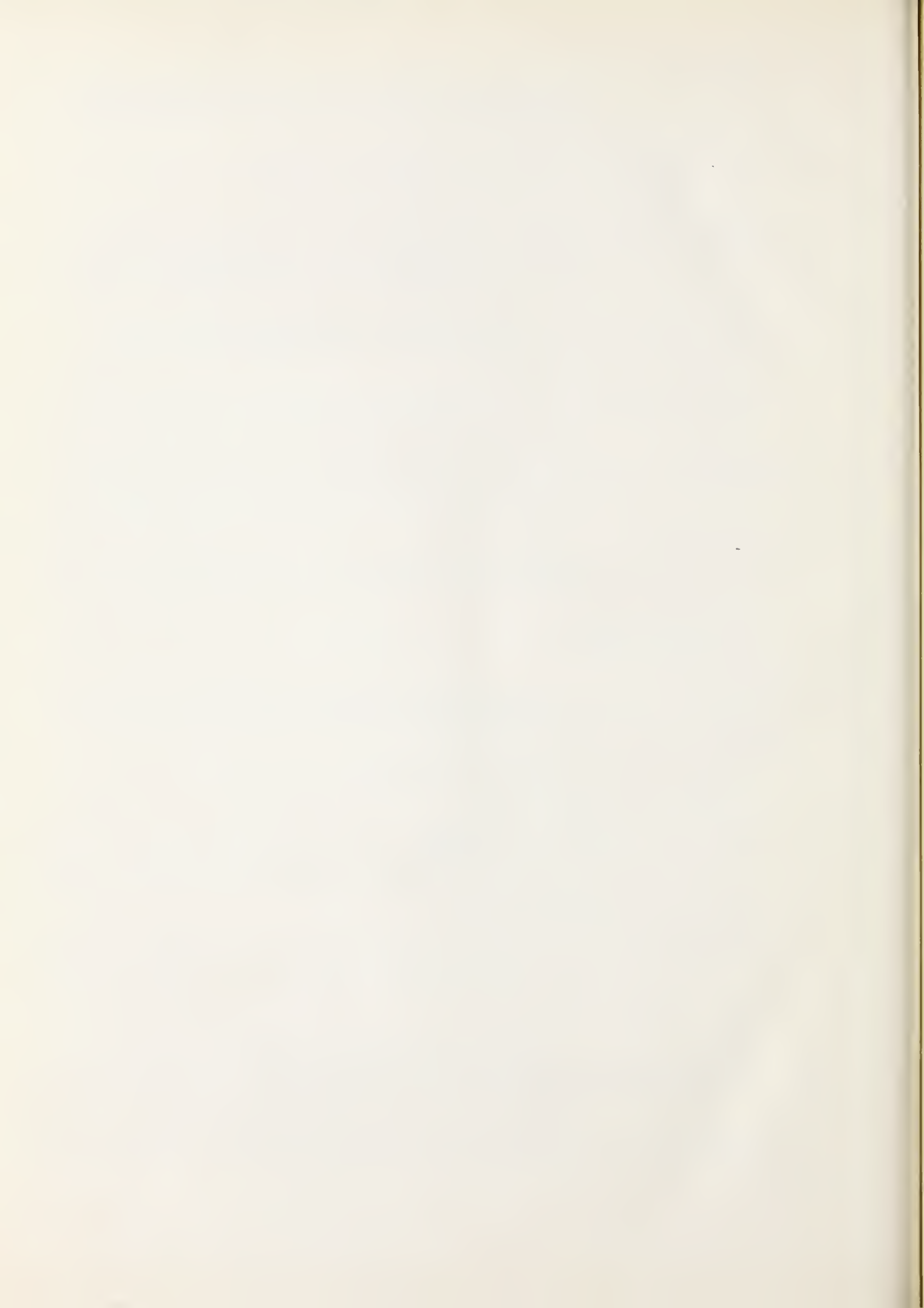
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